

**Redeeming Memories: A Visual Investigation into the Lives of Convict Women**

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

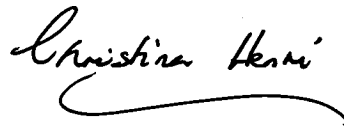
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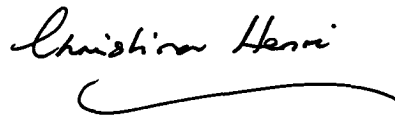
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## ABSTRACT

This research explores the artist's role as an instigator, facilitator and advocate. By inviting members of the community to participate in an art project, the research project investigates art's potential for generating significant community engagement and facilitating shared cultural experience. In focusing on the subject of convict women, community participants have both reflected on and raised awareness of a history shrouded by a veil of amnesia.

The project has involved the development of a large-scale installation, entitled *Departures and Arrivals*, individual components of which have been created by members of the public. The installation has been presented in general community settings in cities and towns around Tasmania and in Sydney. The sites chosen have been historic convict sites or art galleries, with the majority of the settings being outdoors. The subject-matter of *Departures and Arrivals* concerns the convict women of 19th-century Van Diemen's Land and the extremely high death-rate, even for the time, among the babies of these women within the Cascades Female Factory at South Hobart. A combination of historical research and community involvement in art production has served to encourage reflection on the tragedy of the scores of deceased babies, the grief of their incarcerated mothers and the grim system to which they were all subjected - and the 'forgetting' that ensued through subsequent generations.

The project has been informed by the philosophies and strategies of various contemporary artists whose work involves community engagement. Some, such as Vivienne Binns and Olafur Eliasson, involve members of the community in actual creative production. Others, whose work derives from socio-cultural concerns and who present their art in a variety of settings outside the formal gallery situation, include Julie Gough, Anne Ferran, Christian Boltanski, Sue Lorraine, Catherine Truman and Julie Blyfield. Traditional cotton is the principal medium employed in *Departures and Arrivals*. Consequently, artists have been studied who, likewise, have



utilised cloth of various kinds as expressive media. These include Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Ann Hamilton and Kim Sooja.

The thesis exhibition presents the major component of the installation, *Departures and Arrivals*: namely, some 1500 ‘bonnets’. It also includes documentation of the entire project as it has been undertaken in its various locations and lists of names, both of convict mothers and of their lost babies. As an objective of the exhibition is to encourage reflection and contemplation of particular local-historical events, it includes provision for public response, in particular feedback from individuals whose own family backgrounds may connect with those documented through the project. The research project has demonstrated the considerable potential of artist/community collaborations in addressing issues of a community’s past: in this case, a painful and hitherto largely unknown aspect of Tasmania’s convict history.

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Contents

	Frontispiece.....	i
	Abstract.....	iv
	Acknowledgements.....	vi
	<b>Introduction:</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 1:</b>	<b>Historical Context.....</b>	<b>5</b>
	<b>Convict Women in Colonial Van Diemen’s Land.....</b>	
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	<b>Artwork.....</b>	<b>16.</b>
	Previous Work.....	16
	<i>Departures and Arrivals.....</i>	<i>29</i>
	Concept and Fabrication.....	
	Involving the Community	
	Presentation in Various Community Settings	
<b>Chapter 3.</b>	<b>Artistic Context</b>	
	Art and Community.....	47
	Art and Historical Interpretation.....	
	Artists of Significance to the Research.....	
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	<b>Exhibition Presentation.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Conclusion:</b> .....		75.
<b>Bibliography:</b> .....		82
<b>Appendices:</b>		
1.	List of Illustrations	83
2.	Occupations of Female Convicts Prior to Transportation	85
3.	List detailing <i>Departures and Arrivals</i> Event schedule	86
4.	Associated poems and songs. <i>900 Babies</i>	87
5.	Van Diemen’s Land	88
6.	In Memory of Little Ones	89
7.	Christina’s Many Bonnets	90
8.	<i>900 Bonnets</i>	92
9.	Curriculum Vitae	93

## **Redeeming Memories: A visual investigation into the lives of convict women.**

### **Introduction**

This project investigates the artist's role as an instigator, facilitator and advocate within the community. By inviting members of the public to participate in an art project, the opportunity arises to investigate art's potential for attracting community engagement and collaboration within the art-making process.

Events in 1969 and the early 1970s in America saw the first protests in that country's art world against racial and sexual discrimination. The United States of America also saw the emergence of the Women's Liberation movement, and this which became the catalyst for the feminist art activities of the 1970s. Women's commitment to art that reflected their political and social awareness genuinely confronted artistic practice in the USA with a continued barrage of questions, analysis and defiance of patriarchal assumptions. As Helen Topliss suggests, 'the insistence on female/feminine artistic orientation, as characterised by the Decorative Arts, provided a platform from which women could springboard into modernist art'.<sup>1</sup> Multimedia, conceptual and cross-disciplinary approaches gave form to their ideas.<sup>2</sup>

In Australia, fuelled by political events abroad - particularly the Vietnam War - the climate was ripe for social and political change. Feminism formed an important part of this awakening. The declaration of International Women's Year in 1975 created a climate for women's contributions in all spheres to receive due acclaim. Women defied the established hierarchy within the arts. Women's cultural traditions were reclaimed, and craft skills — especially sewing — re-emerged and were celebrated, thus reclaiming status for traditions hitherto denied by established conceptions of craft as 'low art'. This led to a broadening of female artists' scope within their profession.

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<sup>1</sup> Topliss H., *Modernism and Feminism*. Australian artists 1900 –1940, Craftsman House, Roseville East, NSW, 1996, p115.

<sup>2</sup> Chadwick, W., *Women, Art and Society*, Thames and Hudson Inc, New York, 1990, p356.

The Women's Art movement promoted textile crafts — an art field generally seen as the domain of women.<sup>3</sup>

Tasmanian historian Tony Rayner notes that, prior to the late 1970s, even mention of one's convict ancestry was socially undesirable, particularly in Tasmania's more isolated areas, where people could more readily trace their family histories back to convict origins.<sup>4</sup> Interest in convict history has grown since the late 1970s; and concurrently — coinciding with the 'Women's Rights' movement — women began to take an interest in the female convict story. At this time, historian and feminist Anne Summers (1945-) wrote *Damned Whores and God's Police: the Colonisation of Women in Australia*. (1975). Seen as a ground-breaking work, Summers' book analysed how the male point-of-view altered public perception of world events, changing our notion of the past. This work has been reprinted twice, once in 1994 and again in 2002. The author's choice of title reflects her reference to the fact that, from '1788 to the 1840s, almost all women in Australia were catagorised as whores — or "damned whores" as Lieutenant Ralph Clark called them'.<sup>5</sup>

Through my art, I aim both to *tell* an aspect of the female convict story, and also to learn more about the lives of individual convict women through their descendants' stories and reflections. I believe that the involvement of present-day women as participants within my art practice creates a suitable context from which may emerge hidden legacies. It is my hope that the documentation of stories pertaining to convict women will add further depth to my final presentation.

Analysis of the lives of individual convict women — retrieving the individual from the anonymity of the past — has been an important component of this research project. The participation of contemporary women in my art practice has created an atmosphere of inclusion and trust, an atmosphere which facilitates the emergence of such hidden legacies. The unravelling of hitherto-undisclosed and suppressed

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<sup>3</sup> Klebesadel, H., *The Women's Art Movement*  
<http://www.wiwomensnetwork.org/womensartmovement.html>

<sup>4</sup> Rayner, T., *Female Factory Female Convicts*, Esperance Press, 2005, p5

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.annesummers.com.au/dwagp.htm>

memories allows for the possibility of an exchange that encourages the airing of grief and loss. The way is then open for healing.

The discovery and documentation of stories pertaining to convict women and their descendants is an important by-product of my art practice, a direct result of my 900 cloth-bonnet installation *Departures and Arrivals* being presented in a variety of significant sites within Tasmania and, in one instance, in Sydney. Letters, photographs and relevant information accompanying the bonnets that have been sewn by members of the public will form part of my thesis exhibition. My aim is for these mementos to signify the babies who died during their mothers' incarceration within the Cascades Female Factory in South Hobart, Tasmania.

Subsequent chapters of this exegesis involve discussion of artists who promote the importance of artistic expression serving as a tool for social analysis and a means of understanding what cannot, perhaps, always be explained by words. By involving the community within my art practice I have tested the standards that instil the values of distinction between 'high art' and 'low art'. I have aimed to show that communal involvement and expression within an art practice can assist in enabling members of society to 'cope with, interpret and make sense of life'.<sup>6</sup>

The theoretical component of this investigation explores a number of issues. In Chapter One I consider the subject of convict women and their place in colonial society. I refer to female convicts' lives in the contexts of a number of sites, including female factories and colonists' homes to which the women were assigned. I compare historians' accounts of convict women and discuss how historians' conclusions have influenced public opinion. I indicate the benefits that arise when an artist acts as *animateur*<sup>7</sup> within the community.

Chapter Two is devoted to discussion of my art practice. It provides a detailed account of the manner in which the project has been pursued. My previous work and its relationship to my current practice are analysed.

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<sup>6</sup> Binns, V., 'The Integration of Work and Art in Australian Society', in *Communicating Arts. Australian Artists in the Community*, Comte, M., et al, Prendergast McCulloch Publishers, North Carlton, 1982, p66.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.animarts.org.uk/> 05.07.07



In Chapter Three I discuss the related practices of a number of artists whose work is also relevant to my field of investigation. Some of these artists - such as Anne Ferran, Julie Gough, Sue Lorraine, Catherine Truman and Julie Blyfield - have connections through empathetic subject-matter. Albeit in differing ways, Olafur Eliasson and Maya Lin demonstrate the potential of community involvement in art activities. Other artists discussed - Christian Boltanski, Kim Sooja, Ann Hamilton and Christo and Jeanne-Claude - bridge the two groups with the significant use of cloth within their installations. Thus each artist examined is pertinent in some respect to the artistic context of my work.

Chapter Four describes the rationale of the thesis exhibition at the Plimsoll Gallery, Centre for the Arts, Hobart, Tasmania.

The Conclusion provides a summary of the investigation and related outcomes.

## Chapter One

### Historical Context — Convict women in Van Diemen's Land.

*... 'To be ignorant of what happened before we were born is to be ever a child - for to reject the significance of our past is to deny ourselves the advantage of the knowledge and experience of all who have preceded us'...*  
*Illinois Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie, 1970*<sup>8</sup>

Between 1788 and 1853 the British Government exported female convicts by ship to (what is now) Australia's east coast. These women - 25,000 of them - were exported to raw fledgling societies that were starved of the female 'commodity'. Hobart Town, Van Diemen's Land, was the final destination for approximately 12,000 such women - a huge influx of desirable young females into a small colony. As Tony Rayner describes the situation, these poor women were the victims of a 'vicious piece of social engineering'.<sup>9</sup>

Convicts were banished from their homeland for the duration of their respective sentences: generally of seven, sometimes of fourteen years in length. Any prisoner-escapees who successfully made it back to Britain, but who then were caught, incurred the death penalty.<sup>10</sup> Convict women were incarcerated in so-called female factories, so named because, originally, women produced goods on-site which supported the growing colony.<sup>11</sup>

Rayner focuses on the aim of female factory discipline to reform the mind of the convict women 'through hard unrelenting toil, a bland diet, plain clothing, forbidding any luxuries — including alcohol and tobacco — silence, obedience and constant surveillance'. 'Good behaviour' resulted in a convict's progression through the various prisoner-classifications, with her commensurate gaining of privileges.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.stephensonhouse.com/> 06.07.07

<sup>9</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p188.

<sup>10</sup> Rayner, T., (2005) p51.

<sup>11</sup> Rayner, T., (2005) p56.

<sup>12</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p97

With the first built in the 1820s, eight female factories existed in Van Diemen's Land, namely,

- George Town Female Factory (c1822-c1834)
- Hobart Town Female Factory (1821-1829)
- Cascades Female Factory — 3 kilometres out of Hobart Town. (1828-1853)
- Launceston Female Factory (successor to the George Town institution) (1834-1855)
- Cascades Female Factory Nursery (1833-1838)
- Brickfields Female Factory — also known as the Brickfields Hiring Depot— (1849-1852), later the Brickfields Nursery — a branch of the Cascades Female Factory at Brickfields — North Hobart (1852- 1854)
- The probation-station hulk *Anson*, moored for most of the time either in or near Prince of Wales Bay on the River Derwent, Hobart (1844-1850)
- Ross Female Factory (1848-1855)

In New South Wales there were six female factories built from 1801-1840s. They were:

- Parramatta Female Factory
- Newcastle Female Factory
- Bathurst Female Factory
- Port Macquarie Female Factory
- Brisbane Female Factory (in the Moreton Bay District)
- Eagle Farm Female Factory (outer Brisbane).

The story of female convicts has been minimally reported within the wider frame of Australian historical writing. During the 1990s, however, female historians such as Kay Daniels (1998), Portia Robinson (Rev. ed. 1993), Joy Damousi (1997) and Deborah Oxley (1996) explored the lives of convict women. Their writings contrasted sharply with the historical anecdotes portrayed by caucasian males such as

A.G.L.Shaw (1981, c1971)<sup>13</sup> and Manning Clark (1979). These male historians tended to deride the convict women, whereas the feminist writers provided an alternative narrative, focusing on the convict women's economic significance for the Australian colonies. *Depraved and Disorderly* — Damousi's analysis in *Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia* — provides numerous stories as to how colonial males 'constructed' women.<sup>14</sup> In *Female Convicts* (1996), Deborah Oxley examines the views of some male historians, including the above-mentioned, and explains the 'logic' that pervades their unsympathetic perspective.<sup>15</sup> Oxley challenges the belief that convict women were 'all of them, with scarcely an exception, drunken and abandoned prostitutes',<sup>16</sup> and her research clearly points to the economic significance of marriage and women's work in the long-term growth of the Australian colonies.<sup>17</sup>

Historians such as Michael Sturma argue that the term 'prostitute' was used with such careless abandon within the nineteenth century that those who were not actually *professional whores* were nevertheless notated as such in the contemporary records.<sup>18</sup> Lloyd Robson's statistical research concluded that the greater proportion of women transported to Australia, though considered generally to be of *bad character*, were not professional prostitutes.<sup>19</sup> These women were being utilised under a different label: no longer slaves, but convicts, though the conditions they faced were very similar.

Deborah Oxley, in her analysis of female convicts, clearly demonstrates how inaccurate the all-encompassing derogatory description of convict women was. In

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<sup>13</sup> Shaw A.G.L., wrote ... 'how many were prostitutes will never be known, almost all contemporaries regarded them as particularly "abandoned"; and even if these contemporaries exaggerated, the picture they presented is a singularly unattractive one'. This is a quote from Robson, L., 'Woman Convicts' in *Historical Studies*, xi, 43ff.

Shaw, A.G.L., *Convicts and the Colonies: A Study of Penal Transportation from Great Britain and Ireland to Australia and other parts of the British Empire*, Faber and Faber, London, 1966, p164.

<sup>14</sup> Damousi, J., *Depraved and Disorderly: Female Convicts, Sexuality and Gender in Colonial Australia*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Ch 2 pp34-58.

<sup>15</sup> Oxley, D., 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas, S., *Convict Workers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, England, 1988, Ch 6, p85.

<sup>16</sup> Perkins, R., *Arena 74*, Push and Pull Politics: Prostitution, Prejudice and Punishment' 1986, p92.

<sup>17</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p96.

<sup>18</sup> Sturma, M. (1978), □ 'Eye of the Beholder: The Stereotype of Women Convicts, 1788-1852' in *Labour History*. May, Volume 34.

<sup>19</sup> Daniels, K., *Convict Women*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1998, p186.

Table 1, (see Appendix 2), it is made abundantly clear that the transported females, though virtual slaves, were, in fact, skilled in various ways and in varying degrees.<sup>20</sup>

In her conclusion, Oxley asserts that these women were not experienced personnel belonging to a criminal class — precisely the reverse: these women were *talented and skilful* workers.<sup>21</sup> The female convicts, mainly of childbearing age, provided the fledgling new colony with prosperity derived substantially from the fruits of their own labour — their own skills — as well as from the future labour contributions of their offspring.

The concept of ‘whore’ is hard to obliterate from the public consciousness. When women were branded as whores within colonial society they were also discriminated against *carte blanche* in other areas. Kay Daniels includes a list of areas where prejudicial treatment would invariably include loss of protection afforded by the law against assault and violence.<sup>22</sup>

Condemned by moralists’ fixation regarding convict women’s sexual behaviour and the consequent branding of women as whores, the prejudicial treatment detailed in the previous footnote, had repercussions for all women, but most especially convict women.<sup>23</sup>

It may seem contradictory to claim that history misrepresented convict women when groups such as the Molesworth Committee’s 1841–43 Inquiry into Transportation<sup>24</sup> argued that 50 per cent of the convict women lived a conscientious existence upon arrival, with a third upholding the letter of the law — maintaining unblemished records — whilst many married, becoming decent members of society. Nevertheless

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<sup>20</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p90

<sup>21</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p96.

<sup>22</sup> *If still under sentence, incarceration or additional punishment could be expected.*

- *If destitute, assistance from benevolent institutions would favour ‘deserving’ as opposed to ‘undeserving’, the latter category being ascribed the ‘loose’ convict women.*
- *They were a marginalised group. No blind-eye afforded their illicit activities.*
- *With the women considered morally inept, their children were systematically removed from their care.*

<sup>23</sup> Daniels, K., (1998), p213.

<sup>24</sup> Molesworth Committee: The Select Committee on Transportation, appointed April, 1837, reported in 1838.

Daniels, K., *Convict Women*, Allen and Unwin, St. Leonards, 1998, p66.

the preference towards abusive labelling of female convicts, stemming from prevailing middle class morality, was prevalent within the colony.<sup>25</sup> Shifting the gaze from such positive statistics, the upholders of middle-class values condemned not only convict women, but also their generations of descendants. Tony Rayner is of the opinion that, until relatively recently, descendants who confessed to convict connections were open to 'rumour, slander and social deprivation'.<sup>26</sup>

Australia's recorded histories and personal memoirs have generally rendered women invisible or presented them stereotypically. In her paper, *Can we free ourselves for Transformation?* (19 August 2001) presented to 'Ideas at the Powerhouse'<sup>27</sup> in Brisbane, Elaine Wainwright states her view of the parallel situation in religion and history-telling where the woman is so often absent, diminished or demeaned. Using the imagery of Eve within religion and society — imagery that categorises woman as temptress — Wainwright invites the audience to draw links between Eve's *immorality* and perceptions of our colonial forebears. Wainwright offers the image of the ignored, the forgotten and the profoundly pigeon-holed to describe the perception of women — namely, the convicts — in Australia's first wave of European immigration. Oxley emphasizes that even in the most recent material the claim persists, 'without explanation or source',<sup>28</sup> that many convict women were whores. Indeed, Oxley explains that the 19<sup>th</sup> century view was that 'female convict' and 'whore' were analogous. Embracing this categorization of convict women as 'damned whores', 19<sup>th</sup> century society — and society up to the present-day — could depict these women as members of an outcast criminal class rather than as pawns of poverty.<sup>29</sup>

The repercussion of this was that these women suffered a double impediment. They were convicts *and* whores. As such, and with the complicity of the male-constructed historical record, they were duly 'forgotten' by their tens of thousands of descendants. Convict women were categorised into a class of their own, one of '*complete invisibility and negation*' (similar to the pigeon-holing of Australia's indigenous

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<sup>25</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p82

<sup>26</sup> Rayner, T., (2004), p5.

<sup>27</sup> Wainwright, E., *Can we free ourselves?* Paper presented at the event Ideas at the Powerhouse, August, 19, 2001, in Brisbane at the Powerhouse, New Farm on the Brisbane River.  
[http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/elaine\\_wainwright.htm](http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/elaine_wainwright.htm) 07.07.06

<sup>28</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p86.

<sup>29</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p86.

women) and into an existence described by Michele Wallace as '*the other*' of '*the other*'.<sup>30</sup>

Arising from my investigation into the lives of convict women I thus perceive a huge cohort of Australian society that has yet existed in a vacuum, surrounded by a wall of amnesia.

In studying Australian artists — especially female artists who are seen to explore the significant questions of their own existence — it is difficult to locate many, however, who have focused upon the history of female convict transportation.

Along with their male counterparts, convict women formed the majority of Australia's first immigrants. Children accompanied women; children were left behind, the last-mentioned category a seemingly-insignificant cohort. The records are full of references to dislocation and fragmentation caused by the exile of these women.<sup>31</sup>

A.G.L. Shaw, in 1966, characterised female convicts as 'the dregs of society',<sup>32</sup> a view enshrined in 1983 by John Hirst, who wrote that Shaw's work, 'finally established the large professional criminal element among the convicts',<sup>33</sup> and by Professor Brian Fletcher who, in 1987, categorically declared that:

*The convicts sent to Australia really were criminals...[not] basically decent people forced into a life of crime by adverse economic conditions.*<sup>34</sup>

Notwithstanding that convict women had been tried, sentenced and convicted, their crimes were usually minor. In general the items they stole were of little value — 'a blanket, a pair of gloves, a loaf of bread, a shirt, even a prayer book'.<sup>35</sup>

Deborah Oxley, in her investigation on female convict workers, presents a picture of skilled women. Oxley shows that 71.2 per cent of the females were, in fact, semi-

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<sup>30</sup> Wallace, M., *Heresies 24*, A Feminist Publication on Art and Politics 12 Years, 'Variations on Negation and the Heresy of Black Feminist Creativity', 1989. p69.

<sup>31</sup> Daniels, K., (1998), p53.

<sup>32</sup> Oxley, D. 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas, S., (1988), p92.

<sup>33</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p4.

<sup>34</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p4.

<sup>35</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p88

skilled working class, skilled working class, ‘middling’ or professional, a finding that is quite at odds with the stereotypical image of these women. By referring to female convicts as society’s dregs — as *the criminal class* — would have served to justify the women’s banishment.

In their joint essay, *Unshackling the Past*,<sup>36</sup> Nicholas and Shergold discuss the mythology perpetuated by a number of male historians.

As Nicholas and Shergold contend, very little of the analyses of Shaw et al stem from quantitative investigation of the convict indents. Rather, they assert, the conclusions are based on hypotheses. The careful elaboration of the nineteenth-century assumption that a criminal class prevailed ‘actually determined the statistical study rather than evolved from it’.<sup>37</sup>

*Convict Workers*, edited by Stephen Nicholas, seeks to redress the notion that convicts were unskilled by proving that this workforce provided essential human capital to the country.<sup>38</sup> Both Nicholas and Shergold also disprove the myth that an organised, distinct criminal class existed in England, showing that, in fact, what was observable about crime in Victorian Britain was the very lack of premeditative villainy.<sup>39</sup>

It is not surprising that the knowledge of convict ancestry, especially female convict ancestry, was locked away inside people’s hearts and minds. Descendants were trapped within this suppression of the truth, waiting for the censorship of shame to be lifted, waiting for acceptance. Thus within the Australian social and cultural psyche, discussion of our convict heritage was typically dealt with by obliteration of physical reminders and by silence.

Until quite recently — and notably in the work of Anne Ferran (see Chapter Three) — the subject of female convicts has not been a popular topic for visual artists in

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<sup>36</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), pp4–5.

<sup>37</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p5.

<sup>38</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), p7.

<sup>39</sup> Nicholas, S., (1988), pp7–8.



narrating the past. Reading through *Past Present*,<sup>40</sup> the National Women's Art Anthology edited by Joan Kerr and Jo Holder in 1999, artwork relating to the subjugation and sexist labelling of convict women, and the resultant stigma that has clung to their descendants, is conspicuously absent. This is not surprising, as it is mainly only since the 1990s that historians have focused much attention on the subject of female convicts.

My memories of history lessons during my high school years in the 1960s conjure up recollections of a mere cursory foray into Australian/Tasmanian subject-matter. I recall snippets of a brief discussion surrounding the alleged extinction of the original occupants of the land, the Aboriginal people. Emphasis was given to Governor Davey's 1816 Proclamation to the Aborigines that took the form of a 'poster' — illustrated boards nailed to trees in the bush — designed by George Frankland<sup>41</sup>, and to the demise of Truganini (ca 1812–1876).<sup>42</sup> Some two decades later, when I chose to study Aboriginal culture as part of my nursing degree, I was made acutely aware of a more accurate account of the indigenous story. I also learned that Truganini's grave, for a brief period, was in the Cascades Female Factory.<sup>43</sup>

My school history lessons focused solely on the lives of convict men, the fruits of whose labour being patently obvious. Convict-built buildings, bridges, roads, art and stone masonry are all on public display across the country. We even know the names of outstanding convict artists and artisans. One example, the Ross Bridge, completed in 1836 — arguably one of the most superb examples of its kind still in existence — has established the fame of convict stonemason Daniel Herbert.<sup>44</sup> This bridge stands within a short walk from the Ross Female Factory Site, established a few years later in the early 1840s.

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<sup>40</sup> Kerr, J., and Holder, J., *Past Present. The National Women's Art Anthology*, Craftsman House, North Ryde, Sydney, 1999.

<sup>41</sup> State Library of Tasmania Images, <http://images.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/Detail.asp?Keywords=frankland%2C+george&x> 19.09.2006  
<sup>42</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truganini](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truganini) – 19.9.2006

<sup>43</sup> Truganini was originally buried in the Cascades Female Factory Site, South Hobart in 1876. The Royal Society of Tasmania, against her express wishes, exhumed her body two years later. Finally her remains were reunited with her people and on the 30th April 1976 her ashes were scattered on the D'Entrecasteaux Channel close to her birthplace.  
[www.women.tas.gov.au/significantwomen/search/truginini/html](http://www.women.tas.gov.au/significantwomen/search/truginini/html) 19.9.2006

<sup>44</sup> <http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/historic/visguide/ross/intro.html> 28.06.07

Many visitors to Ross may have spent time admiring Herbert's carvings on the bridge, unaware that female convicts had contributed to the prosperity of the area through their domestic service. Convict women's less visual work has attracted little positive attention.

In 2003 I serendipitously wandered onto the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site during an 'Historical Landscape' drawing class.<sup>45</sup> The art that I am now producing has stemmed from the impact of this visit. From the moment I walked into the space of Yard One at the Female Factory an oppressive feeling of bleakness overwhelmed me. It was a palpable, disquieting response within the grassy space. I lingered within the confines of the yard's high sandstone walls long after the other students had gone and I pondered the lives of those unfortunate enough to have been incarcerated there.

I was surprised that these prominent, striking sandstone walls guarding the grounds had not previously caught my attention. The unusually high walls border a section of the only road visitors to the municipal waste disposal site exit along. I wondered how many other drivers have passed by without a glance. It was some time after this event that I discovered that the entire site was saved from demolition through the perseverance of a group within the National Council of Women of Tasmania.<sup>46</sup> The total structure was to have been annihilated and lost to public gaze and conjecture, the ultimate act of erasing the suffering of convict women from the historical record!

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<sup>45</sup> Cascades Female Factory Historic Site, 16 Degraives Street, South Hobart, Tasmania.

<sup>46</sup> The National Council of Women of Tasmania worked actively in the late 1960s and again in the early 1980s on saving the Female Factory Historic Site from demolition. As one of its 1975 projects, during the International Year of Women, a sub-group was formed, headed by Mrs. Sue Dulfer-Hyams, the then-President of NCWT,\* to have the importance of the Female Factory recognised by Government and made a Site of Historical Significance. This sub-group went as a delegation — as the women had done several years before — to the then-Premier and obtained his support for saving the site. This record of the sub-committee's actions is included in the Minutes of NCWT General and Executive meetings for mid-1975. The site still remained a Government car-park for at least 10 years thereafter. Julia Clark (involved through TMAG at the time, and who now holds the position of Interpretations and Collections Manager, Port Arthur Historic Site) states that the submission to the Government was worked on in 1982, resulting in a halting of the Government plans to turn the area into an industrial site. Until very recently NCWT Executive meetings were held on the first Wednesday of each month and General Meetings on the third Wednesday of each month. At that time over forty — fifty women, (most representing an affiliated organisation), attended general meetings. An average of twenty — which included the advisers — attended Executive Meetings, hence there was a healthy community concern by a large group of southern Tasmanian women about the issue.

\*Dodson, Gladys, *The History of the National Council of Women of Tasmania Inc.* 1999, (for the Centenary: unpublished), p23.

Within the site, a sense of the pervading presence of those maligned convict women seemed to call for an acceptance of the worth of their lives. Little remained as a tangible acknowledgment of their very existence. I was disconcerted by the fact that someone like myself, a permanent long-term resident of Tasmania, a State with the highest percentage of convict ancestry within the population, could have remained unaware of the lives and the role of convict women within nineteenth-century society.<sup>47</sup> It seemed meaningful to me to ascertain who else may have shared this void, this lack of knowledge. I began questioning others on their understanding of female factory sites and their original inhabitants. In many cases the response showed a complete unawareness of such sites, their original functions or occupants. This ignorance appeared to me to be a direct consequence of society's shaming of the convict woman — a shaming that has denied many present-day Australians the truth of their origins. I realised that I had never questioned why our State, when a colony, relinquished in 1856 the name of Van Diemen's Land to become known henceforth as Tasmania.<sup>48</sup> The change of name, of course, was an attempt to remove the hated 'convict stain'.

Historians such as Kay Daniels, Joy Damousi and Anne Summers<sup>49</sup> have created a significant shift in attitudes towards convict women. Jeanette Hyland's research into female convicts who arrived in Van Diemen's Land on board the *Grove* resulted in *Maids, Masters and Magistrates*, a story of twenty of the 165 female convicts who became nursemaids, laundry maids, housemaids, cooks, dressmakers and servants-of-all-work.<sup>50</sup> Trudy Cowley's book, *A Drift of 'Derwent Ducks'*, won the Kay Daniels Award in 2005. This book narrates the lives of the 200 female convicts transported on the *Australasia* from Ireland in 1849 and is testament, in most cases, to their marrying, settling down and successfully raising families.<sup>51</sup> Dianne Snowden's '*A White Rag Burning*': *Irish women who committed arson in order to be transported to Van Diemen's Land* is the outcome of her Ph.D. thesis.<sup>52</sup> These publications provide the public with a more intimate account of female convicts and add to the growing

<sup>47</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p1.

<sup>48</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tasmania> 12.08.06

<sup>49</sup> Summers, A., *Damned Whores and God's Police*, Penguin Books, Camberwell, 2002.

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.familyhistorybookshop.org.au/prod7015.htm> 28.06.07

<sup>51</sup> [www.researchtasmania.com.au/ADoDD/outline.htm](http://www.researchtasmania.com.au/ADoDD/outline.htm) 27.06.07

<sup>52</sup> University of Tasmania, 2005.

wealth of literary material now available through research being undertaken, predominantly, by female historians.

In her paper, *And the Mortality Frightful: Infant and Child Mortality in the Convict Nurseries of Van Diemen's Land*, Rebecca Kippen quotes the assessment by Potts and Campbell that Female Factories existed as *institutionalised infanticide machines*.<sup>53</sup> As a mother I found the concept difficult to absorb, certain that the vast majority of women to whom my art was addressed would feel equally challenged by the claim. My belief was that the women whom I subsequently invited to make baby bonnets — a central component of my installation — would feel a true sense of compassion for the convict mother's situation: her grief and loss.

I visualised producing an artwork that would highlight the lives of these convict women and stir public interest. There seemed to be a need for an artwork that might generate a strong visual dialogue — a creative discourse — between myself, as *artist-animateur*, and willing members of the community.

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<sup>53</sup> Kippen, R., (2006), p10.

## Chapter Two

### Artwork

#### Previous work

*Feigning*

*Locked in Time*

*900 Bonnets*

#### New Work

*Departures and Arrivals*

In 2003 my Bachelor of Fine Arts with Honours research investigated the isolation of women in Van Diemen's Land/Tasmania. The subsequent body of work that I produced fell into two categories. The first comprised art that I alone created; the second comprised art that I conceived and made, but that also utilised specific elements produced by scores of women from around Australia, all descendants of convict women who had spent time in the Cascades Female Factory.

These descendants contributed not only tangible materials for my work, but also, in many cases, oral histories of their respective convict forebears. Establishing lines of correspondence with close to a hundred women, I thus established a large network of enthusiastic resource personnel who felt that my projects were, to them, personally meaningful. They willingly contributed not only their names, but also other components, such as their palm prints and hair samples, for me to incorporate within my works.

My Honours work laid the foundation, in terms of theme, projects and methodology, for my subsequent Masters work.

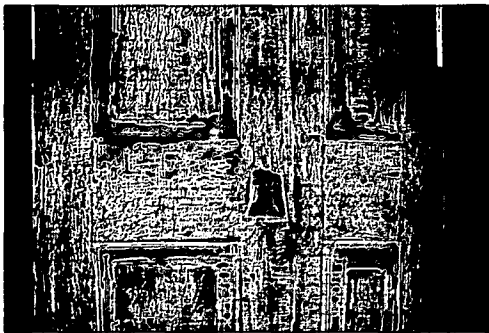
#### *Feigning*

I sought to evoke what I imagined would have been a convict woman's deep sense of loss: loss of family, of home, of community, of native land, and of more. The loss of her hair, I felt, might symbolise her sense of loss in the most general sense. Hair is

also historically valid and thematically relevant. There are many references to women in the Cascades Female Factory having their hair cut off, a punishment intended to humiliate and shame.<sup>54</sup> As Damousi states, the act of hair-cutting was a violation of convict women's femininity and thus of their identity.<sup>55</sup> The significance of hair underpins my multimedia work, *Feigning*.

As one way of hiding their cut hair — their disgrace — some of the women braided together cuttings of hair to form a plait, which they positioned below the front of their bonnets. To duplicate this act, I constructed a single plait made from cuttings I collected from the various Cascades Female Factory descendants who provided me with snippets, chunks and, in a few instances, entire plaits of their own hair. From these contributions I fashioned a single large plait. The simple and somewhat pathetic-looking plait that resulted referred to the convict women's desperate attempts to regain a minimal degree of respectability and a slight measure of attractiveness.<sup>56</sup> The plait was suspended from the ceiling in front of a full-length mirror. Assisted by special lighting, the plait reflected onto a mirror, upon which the names were inscribed of all the female convict ancestors of the women whose hair made up the plait. The image of descendants' hair seemingly merging with ancestors' names evoked a link between present and past.

### *Locked in Time*



*Locked in Time* incorporated rubbings and print media on two sheets of paper. For this work I spent time at Runnymede, a wealthy colonialist's home of the kind to which convict women were routinely assigned as virtual slave labour. This piece, however,

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<sup>54</sup> Frost, L. & Maxwell-Stewart, J. (2001) *Chain Letters Narrating Convict Lives*, Melbourne University Press Carlton South, p81.

<sup>55</sup> Damousi, J., 'Beyond the 'Origins debate': Theorising Sexuality and Gender disorders in Convict Women's History'. *Australian Historical Studies*, 1996, Vol. 27, No. 106, p66.

<sup>56</sup> Damousi, J., (1996), p60.

focused not upon the female convicts but rather the upper-class women whom the former served. My research suggested that a sizeable proportion of the female well-to-do felt, in fact, a strong sense of unease in their new environment, one so very different, physically and socially, from their British homeland.

From the many interior window shutters at Runnymede I selected a pair in the master bedroom. Choice of this room was based upon the fact that, typically, husbands were away for considerable periods of time, leaving their wives isolated. My conjecture was that the women's vulnerability must have been felt most keenly at night. I used pastels and pencils on tracing paper — a very flimsy paper in order to highlight the fragility of the women's emotions — to construct a work that evoked the felt (and actual) containment of the women at Runnymede. All the windows of the house contained wooden shutters for security on both the outside and inside. I made rubbings of these shutters, and over these I silk-screened parts of sentences taken from diaries belonging to some of the mistresses of Runnymede. The writings that I chose spoke of isolation, fear and longing for homeland and family left behind.

The resultant *Locked in Time* takes the form of a scroll intended to suggest curtains. The work hangs in the two front rooms (now the W.D. Booth Gallery) of the Matron's Cottage, (Cascades) Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart.<sup>57</sup>

I was permitted access to the Female Factory Historic Site in South Hobart and bestowed with recognition as an honorary artist-in-residence. My subsequent research provided many stories that described the tragic lives of the convict women and their babies. I made rubbings of a section of the stone wall that separated Yard Three from Yard Four. Yard Four housed the Matron's Cottage and the adjacent area accommodated the nursery quarters. I undertook this work during winter and I rugged myself up in multiple layers of clothing, yet I was unable to combat the chilly weather. The Female Factory sits in a gully that borders the Hobart Rivulet which, at this point in its descent to the Derwent River, is known often to have overflowed into the grounds of the institution during the days when convict women were its main

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<sup>57</sup> The female factory site in South Hobart was originally referred to as the Cascades Female Factory. Now it is referred to as the Female Factory Historic Site, nevertheless Lovell and Chen in their report written for World Heritage listing nomination refer to the site as the Cascades Female Factory Site.

occupants. The major drawbacks, both then and now, are the site's containment within a gully and its geographical proximity to Mt. Wellington.<sup>58</sup> This position attracts katabatic winds that contribute to exceptionally bleak weather.<sup>59</sup> Long known by Hobartians as 'Shadow-of-Death Valley', the area is condemned by Tony Rayner as *the worst possible site*.<sup>60</sup>

As I stood on my ladder producing my rubbings of the walls, I tried to imagine being a convict woman dressed in a serge garment (deliberately designed to chafe the skin), with no 'knickers',<sup>61</sup> an apron and often-inadequate shoes.<sup>62</sup>

Female Factory regulations that governed female convicts' dress, though precise in their detail, made no mention of what would be considered warm clothing that might benefit the cold conditions of Shadow-of-Death Valley.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> 'The sun did not shine on the Nursery Yard at all during the winter months — it remained a cold and perpetually damp place'.

Kippen, R., *And the Mortality Frightful Infant and Child Mortality in the Convict Nurseries of Van Diemen's Land*, 2006, <http://www.femalefactory.com.au/FFRG>, p.3.

Combination of shade, due to foothills to the north and a rapidly narrowing and shallowing valley directly below the mountain cause the cold air falling from the mountain to pool and gather.

Rayner, T., (2005), p132.

<sup>59</sup> <http://soer.justice.tas.gov.au/2003/atm/1/issue/6/index.php> 02/11/06

<sup>60</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p129.

<sup>61</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p163.

<sup>62</sup> Colonial regulations specified that female convict dress must be:

*... made of cheap and coarse materials, and shall consist of a cotton or stuff gown, or petticoat, a jacket and apron, with a common straw bonnet of strong texture; and the classes all be distinguished as follows,*

*viz: —The 1st. Class shall wear the dress without any distinguishing mark.*

*The 2d. Class by a large yellow C on the left sleeve of the jacket.*

*The 3d. Class by a large yellow C in the centre of the back of the jacket, one on the right sleeve, and another on the back part of the petticoat.*

*Each Female is to be furnished with clean Linen every week, viz: — 2 Aprons, 2 Shifts, 2 Caps 2 Handkerchiefs, and 2 Pair Stockings.*

<sup>63</sup> 'The shadow of the valley of death'

Cascades Female Factory between Hobart Rivulet and Mount Wellington, Tasmania

Photograph [c1890] courtesy of the Archives Office of Tasmania

Rayner, T., (2005), p iv



## 900 Bonnets



The significance of the 900 separate images used in *900 Bonnets* relates to the approximate number of nine hundred babies born to convict women who spent time in the female factory system. When I began research at the Cascades Female Factory in 2003 it appeared that out of nearly 1,200 babies born there between 1829 and 1877, approximately 900 died in infancy. Hence my reference to this number — essentially a notional figure — within both my *900 Bonnets* and subsequent *Departures and Arrivals* installations. Additional research by Ann Ferran, corroborated by Trudy Cowley in 2006, has shown the figure to be higher, with 1,148 babies, in fact, known to have died between 1829 and 1856.<sup>64</sup>

My rubbings of the sandstone walls proved unsuccessful and I abandoned the piece. A new interest had already emerged after a visit to the privately-owned Narryna Heritage Museum, in Battery Point, an inner suburb of Hobart. Built in 1836, this residence exemplified the fine colonial homes of Van Diemen's Land's wealthy citizens. Here, as at Runnymede, I saw a different side to the female convict story and became entranced with the finery of the upper-class women's clothes, some of it tailored by convict women. I drew comparisons between the splendid garments of these more privileged women and the drab apparel of the garments' convict makers.

Under the assignment system, convict women were allowed out of the Female Factory in order to serve the classes 'above' them in a variety of domestic servant positions, such as maids, nursemaids, cooks and seamstresses, depending upon their respective

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<sup>64</sup> The list of the 1,148 names is now available for viewing and downloading from the Female Factory Historic Site website. [www.femalefactory.com.au/FFRG/nurseries.htm#births](http://www.femalefactory.com.au/FFRG/nurseries.htm#births) 20.11.06

skills.<sup>65</sup> At prosperous homes such as Runnymede and Narryna, assigned convict women could expect a roof over their heads, a set of clothes, rations and a palliasse and blankets. Extra tobacco and tea were forthcoming for good behaviour.<sup>66</sup>

Visiting these colonial homes brought a different perspective on the convict women story. I gleaned more insight into the life of convict women 'in servitude' by reading through diaries belonging to the wives of subsequent owners of Runnymede, particularly Anna Maria Nixon, wife of Bishop Nixon, and the generations of the Bayley family. These journals spoke of daily life and the attempts of the household mistress to mould their servants' conduct. I spent a considerable amount of time at Runnymede and became familiar with the surroundings and spaces in which the convict women would have once lived and worked.

At the time of its construction (1836-39) by sea captain Andrew Haigh on a two-acre property in Battery Point, Narryna was one of only three homes in this now high-density suburb. Like Runnymede, Narryna houses an antique collection of national significance and that includes furniture, china, silver, paintings and other works of fine art.<sup>67</sup> There is also an impressive costume collection on site. It was the costumes that caught my eye and altered the course of my visual interpretation. In a very small room at Narryna, set mid-way up the flight of sweeping stairs that lead to the third floor, on shelves barely large enough to hold the many flat white boxes that lay quietly in storage. These boxes were veritable treasure-troves. Among other artifacts, they contained delicate white bonnets, perfectly preserved: signifiers of their wearers' once-precious lives. Therein, I felt, lay the symbol of the grief borne by those convict women who were also grieving mothers.

Contemplating the rows of white boxes with their most beautiful contents — the delicate lace bonnets nestled in the folds of tissue paper — I reflected upon what those convict babies would have lacked: their cossetting when alive and ritual draping in death. The baby bonnets I had viewed that were carefully stored in museums had

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<sup>65</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p53.

<sup>66</sup> Morris, M., *Placing Women*, Office of the Status of Women, State Government of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania 1996. [www.women.tas.gov.au/resources/reports/placewomen](http://www.women.tas.gov.au/resources/reports/placewomen) 3.11.06

<sup>67</sup> [www.discovertasmania.com/home/index.cfm?siteid=147&display=product&productid=9000606&srch=true](http://www.discovertasmania.com/home/index.cfm?siteid=147&display=product&productid=9000606&srch=true) -

once adorned a baby's head, framing the face. I imagined it being lovingly positioned by a woman, free to acknowledge her love for her own child. For convict women the story was different. The outlook of those in authority at the female factories was that the convict mothers should not be encouraged to spend intimate contact-time with their young, but as I held the bonnets it seemed almost as though I was holding the baby to whom the bonnet had once belonged.<sup>68</sup>

I chose nine bonnets from the collection to work with. I photographed the bonnets and then silk-screened these images onto 900 separate A4 acetate sheets. I specifically chose white ink to give the images a 'spectral' quality. The acetate sheets were held together with clear plastic press-studs. The bonnet images were centred identically, substantially covering the surface of the acetate sheets which, in turn, were arranged symmetrically. Ten rows, each of ninety A4 sheets formed an ethereal 'block' of 900 ghostly images. Each of the rows was hung separately from slender wooden boughs connected with nylon fishing-line to the ceiling rafters. In its initial presentation, the artwork was illuminated by diffused sunlight radiating through a skylight, giving *900 Bonnets* an ethereal quality. Though the time involved in making this work was considerable, the task assumed a meditative dimension, encouraging thoughts of the endless days of monotonous routine and discipline endured by the convict women themselves.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Separation of convict mother and child was considered to be an effective form of punishment and yet it denied the woman maternity. The female factories at first served as nurseries where women could provide for their children until they were about three years old. From 1833, however, babies were removed from their mothers at nine months to make the mothers more available for assignment....it was testified to an inquiry that....beneficial to the children to cut off the connexion with the mother.

Damoussi, J., 'Beyond the 'Origins Debate': Theorising Sexuality and Gender Disorder in Convict women's History', *Australian Historical Studies*, 1997, Vol 27, No 106, p68

<sup>69</sup> The system was one of punishment through labour and discipline combined with moral reformation through religion, 'industry and regularity'.

(Brand 1991: 242-52, quoted in Evans 1996: 124).

<http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/publications/tech/rossplan/1-3.pdf> p11. 03/11/06

## Current body of work — Master of Fine Arts Project.

### *Departures and Arrivals* 2004 – 2007



This artwork is a major extension of the basic theme for *900 Bonnets*. This time comprising nine hundred actual fabric bonnets, all (with the exception of my own bonnet) made by community volunteer-participants, *Departures and Arrivals* is a three-dimensional transportable monument. Not only the tangible artistic product itself, but also the record of the work's conception, organisation, art-making process, presentation and the community responses it has generated — the work's 'journey' — form the major component of my submission.

The installation honours convict women's babies who were born within the Cascades Female Factory and who died in infancy within the institution's walls. By any standard, the infant mortality rate in the Female Factory was horrific.<sup>70</sup> In her paper, *'And the Mortality Frightful': Infant and Child Mortality in the Convict Nurseries of Van Diemen's Land*, Rebecca Kippen states that the infant mortality of those born in the convict nurseries during the 1840s and early 1850s was in the order of 35 to 40 per cent, two to three times the level of infant mortality within the general population. However, Kippen hypothesises that, because of under-registration, even these high rates probably underestimate the true level of mortality. She states,

*The officials responsible for registering births and deaths in the nurseries were notoriously lax in their duties. For example, in 1846 and 1847 there were no deaths at all registered in the convict nurseries, although deaths certainly took place and mortality was just as high in the 1830s and early*

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<sup>70</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), pp145–146.

Information I have received from participants in *Departures and Arrivals* concurs with this assumption. For example, a descendant of Mary Ann Morris, a convict incarcerated within the Female Factory with twin daughters, informed me during a visit to Hobart in 2004 that one of her ancestor's twins (Imogene) was recorded as having died whilst housed within the institution. Subsequent research has revealed that, though not officially documented, it is virtually certain that the other twin (Emma Jane) also died therein. (Extensive searches by descendants have been unsuccessful in locating any mention of Emma Jane's existence from the time of her mother's release from the Cascades Female Factory just a few weeks after Imogene's recorded death. The family has concluded that Emma Jane must have died during her time within the factory.)<sup>72</sup>

Whilst searching through death records in the Tasmanian Registrar-General's Department, I noted that the official term used for recording infant births and deaths was 'Arrivals and Departures'. This clinical, impersonal method of recording was, to me, quite chilling. *Departures and Arrivals* was chosen as my installation's title. I incorporated the use of the administrative language, reversing the order of the words so as to focus on the cycle of the women's journey, their departure from their homelands and arrival in the Antipodes, as well as their metaphysical journey from the familiar to the unknown.

In a report Coroner Moore wrote regarding the tragedy of babies dying in custody he objected to every area of management of the Cascades Female Factory Hospital and Nursery. He cited his objection to female convicts being 'punished for becoming pregnant — six months sentence, to labour, in the Crime Class after their baby was weaned, whilst the father of the child is rarely, if ever punished'.<sup>73</sup> Rayner reports on a coroner's investigation into baby Barbara Hemmings' death at the Cascades Female Factory on 26 March 1838. Attacking the conditions in the nursery, the coroner's

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<sup>71</sup> <http://www.femalefactory.com.au/FFRG/pdfs/RebeccaKippen8Aug06.pdf> 20.11.06

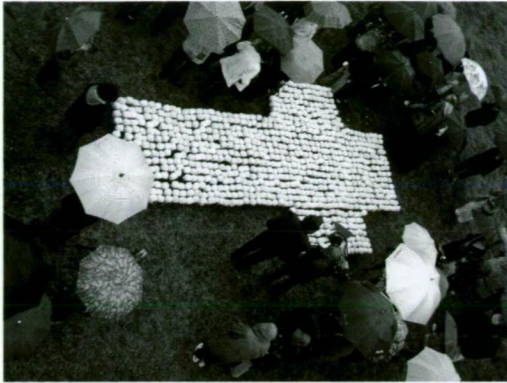
<sup>72</sup> Rogers, L., and Metcalf, E., *Hammersleys of Beaconsfield*, self-published, 2003, p24.

<sup>73</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), p148



report described the nurseries as being crowded, the yard too small with no sunlight and the cells too dark.<sup>74</sup>

### Involving the Community



Lisa Philip-Harbutt recognises the value for ‘non-art-specialist’ members of the broad community who work collaboratively within an art project. Any level or degree of participation of such individuals imbues them with a sense of being actively involved in the creative process of art-making.<sup>75</sup> She cites Dobson, in *The Art of Management and the Aesthetic Manager*, who states: ‘The separation of the roles of art, craft and business is a strictly modern phenomenon’.<sup>76</sup>

I have chosen to use the word *animateur* because it succinctly describes an artist, in any art form, who uses her/his skills, talents and personality to enable others to compose, design, devise, create, perform or engage with works of art of any kind.<sup>77</sup> This word and concept have been given considerable coverage in the UNESCO publication, *Cultural development: experience and policies*.<sup>78</sup>

I support the definition of culture as ‘a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behavior’.<sup>79</sup> Community art functions as an agent of cultural development. My interpretation concurs with Philip-Harbutt, who defines community art as a facilitation of artistic

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<sup>74</sup> Rayner, T., (2005), pp149-150

<sup>75</sup> [www2.eou.edu/~kdahl/cultdef.html](http://www2.eou.edu/~kdahl/cultdef.html) 08.08.07

<sup>76</sup> Dobson, J., *The Art of Management and the Aesthetic Manager*, Quorum Books, Connecticut, USA, 1999, p125.

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.animarts.org.uk/animarts\\_research\\_report\\_summary.pdf](http://www.animarts.org.uk/animarts_research_report_summary.pdf) 08.06.07

<sup>78</sup> Girard, A., *Cultural development: experience and policies*, UNESCO, Paris, France, 1972, pp55-69.

<sup>79</sup> [www2.eou.edu/~kdahl/cultdef.html](http://www2.eou.edu/~kdahl/cultdef.html) 13.06.07

activities undertaken by a community, frequently created through collaborative processes and subsequently recognised by that group as 'theirs'. The concept of *Departures and Arrivals* is mine, yet by involving members of the community in the delivery of my vision, its many collaborators have also derived a valid sense of 'ownership' of the completed work.

Participants represent a broad section of the community. I wanted the makers of bonnets to mirror, in a sense, the convict women themselves, in terms of their non-specificity of age, life experience, beliefs, skills and personalities, and their relative anonymity in the grand order of things.

My decision to use cloth as the medium of choice was important for a number of reasons. In England — the '*Mother Country*' — 14<sup>th</sup> century embroidery on cloth, largely created for religious use, exists today as testament to the sewer's skill, and still celebrates church and community life. Centuries later, the Industrial Revolution saw cloth as the first material to be wrenched from local cottage production for manufacture on a massive scale in the new giant factories. In spite of this onslaught, the handcraft survived, becoming a national grass-roots passion for the English.<sup>80</sup> In 1872, this passion was reflected in the founding of the Royal School of Needlework in London, the first of its kind.

Elizabeth Fry, a humanitarian who worked tirelessly to reform the British penal system, especially in regard to women, assisted convict women transported to Australia. One way in which she did so was to give each a useful 'bag of things.' From the swatches of material included in the 'useful bag', the transported convict women made patchwork quilts on their voyage, to be sold on arrival in the new colony as a means to obtain some income.<sup>81</sup>

The bonnets subsequently sent to me by members of the community varied considerably in design. Some were very plain, some were embellished with minimal decoration, whilst others were extraordinarily ornate and quite exquisite. Some

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<sup>80</sup> Constantine, M., and Reuter, L., *Whole Cloth*, Monacelli Press Inc., New York, 1997, p70.

<sup>81</sup> Elizabeth Fry (née Gurney; 21 May 1780 – 12 October 1845) was an English prison reformer, social reformer and philanthropist.

participants with lace-making skills tatted their own lace, with which they adorned their bonnets. In other cases, cloth was used that had belonged to the bonnet-maker's ancestors; one bonnet was made from material taken from a dress belonging to the sewer's grandmother, only one generation removed from the grandmother's convict forebear. Many contributors used cottons and found objects from sewing boxes belonging to their grandmothers. Old pillowcases were used and some participants used doilies. On separate bonnets one donor embroidered the words 'peace', 'hope' and 'love'. Some women embroidered children's full names, while others chose to place the initials of their respective ancestors' babies on their bonnets. One particular bonnet stood out amongst the others with its very distinct dark blue trimmings. All were equally valued. The community participants displayed a strong sense of ownership with regard to the collective work, even though it was made clear to each contributor that their sewing was to form a permanent component of the 900 cloth-bonnet memorial and was not returnable.

In *Departures and Arrivals*, 900 replicas of cloth christening bonnets are each placed round a polystyrene ball similar to a milliner's dummy 'head'. Each dummy-head is covered with stocking material and attached to a twenty-five centimetre length of timber dowel. These lengths of dowel, in turn, either connect onto wooden base-plates or, alternatively, are sunk into the earth, depending upon whether the installation is to be sited indoors or out. The bonnets are arranged in the shape of a very large Latin cross.

Subsequently, *Departures and Arrivals* has been shown at eight different Tasmanian sites, beginning in 2004, when it formed a component of Tasmania's Bicentennial Celebrations. The installation has continued journeying throughout the State and the mainland since.<sup>82</sup>

This project presents the concept of an artwork serving as a catalyst for community action and development by generating understanding and empathy with an aspect of a particular community's own history. Documentation of the logistical and the social processes involved in the ongoing presentation of *Departures and Arrivals* within a

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<sup>82</sup> List of sites. Refer Appendix Three

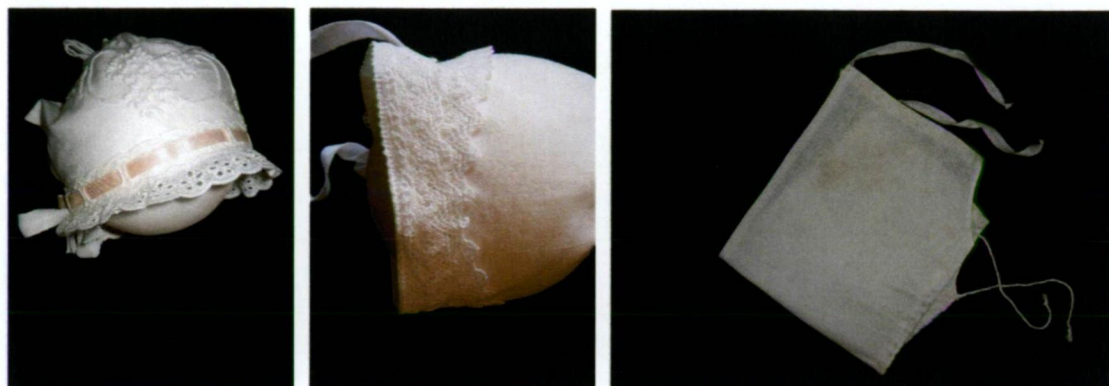


number of community venues therefore forms an important component, both of my exhibition and this exegesis.

*Departures and Arrivals* remains a work-in-progress. In a conceptual sense, the work's own journey echoes the enforced journeys of the convict women themselves and the subsequent 'journeys', both literal and metaphorical, of their families — the tens of thousands of descendants of convict women in present-day Tasmania and beyond.

## *Departures and Arrivals*

How the project was pursued



How to involve the community? I gave myself but a few months to publicise the project, organise the materials required, assemble the materials and the bonnets and be ready for the first presentation. I had decided that the inaugural showing of *Departures and Arrivals* should coincide with a Saturday closest to International Women's Day, 8<sup>th</sup> March 2004. Thus the 6<sup>th</sup> March was chosen.

It was necessary to publicise *en masse* if I was to recruit some 900 bonnet-makers. I began by working through the Yellow Pages of the Tasmanian telephone books, calling every craft business and asking them to send information about my project to their client base. Then I moved on to Guilds: craft, embroidery, quilting, lace- makers and organisations such as the Country Women's Association, family history groups, genealogy societies and a number of shops in rural areas. The word spread regarding my project and I was interviewed on a variety of radio stations - state and local community networks, as well as ABC Radio National. Following my interview with Radio National, I received numerous offers from people in mainland States, especially New South Wales, as well as the ACT.<sup>83</sup>

My aim was to involve everybody who wished to make a bonnet. In order not to have anybody financially disadvantaged, I applied to the Tasmanian Bicentennial Program for funding and was successful in my application in two separate grant rounds. From

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<sup>83</sup> ABC National Radio breakfast show which resulted in an interview with announcer Peter Thompson on the 5<sup>th</sup> February, 2004. [www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/brkfast/stories/s1038297.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/brkfast/stories/s1038297.htm) - 8.06.07

this funding I was able to buy all the calico, tape and ribbon required to make the 900 bonnets. The 'prototype' bonnet was the plainest (and therefore the easiest to duplicate) amongst the elegant bonnets in the Narryna collection. The conundrum for me was in choosing a bonnet that was aesthetic, yet could be sewn by people representative of a cross-section of the community, and not requiring exceptional sewing skills.

Close to 900 bonnet patterns were sent out to participants in Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and the ACT. Every package contained prepared calico templates, ribbon and tape, plus instructions and information about the project.<sup>84</sup> I was astonished by the fact that, instead of 900 bonnets, a total of 1,905 were returned. With so many additional bonnets (more than twice the required number), I initiated a policy of rotating the bonnets for the installation's showing in different settings so that all donors would be afforded an opportunity to have their work included.

The town of St Mary's, founded in 1834 on the North-East Coast of Tasmania,<sup>85</sup> became a focal-point of bonnet construction. Many of the town's women gathered together sewing bonnets, many of the women in memory of their own ancestral ties with the babies whom *Departures and Arrivals* commemorated.<sup>86</sup>

Through the 1840s, the adjacent settlement of Grassy Bottom contained a convict probation station, housing 300 convicts who provided free labour within the district.<sup>87</sup> Local properties such as Cullenswood benefited from the assigned female convicts' labour.<sup>88</sup> It seemed only proper that, at the opening ceremony for *Departures and Arrivals*' exhibition at St Mary's, the local *a cappella* group, Grassy Bottom Singers, be involved and sing lullabies to the babies commemorated.

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<sup>84</sup> Details of bonnet material in appendix.

<sup>85</sup> [www.walkabout.com.au/locations/TASStMarys.shtml](http://www.walkabout.com.au/locations/TASStMarys.shtml) - 05/11/06

<sup>86</sup> A local health food store became the collection point, and the shop's notice-board provided updates on the bonnet-making and, eventually, the completed installation's travels. Purple Possum Wholefoods and Cafe [www.purplepossum.com.au/](http://www.purplepossum.com.au/) - 05/11/06

<sup>87</sup> [www.smh.com.au/news/Tasmania/Avoca/2005/02/17/1108500205639.html](http://www.smh.com.au/news/Tasmania/Avoca/2005/02/17/1108500205639.html) - 05/11/06

<sup>88</sup> Cullenswood built in 1845 by Robert Vincent Legge has remained within the family and presently is owned by the Break O Day Council Mayor Robert Legge and his wife Jean. In a conversation with Mayor Robert Legge, I was informed that he has recently discovered a list of names of convict women who were assigned to the family property and is furnishing me with the womens' names. Phone conversation 10.06.07.

[worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.](http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=SHOW&db=:2432878&surname=Legeyt%2C+Jane+Anna)

[cgi?op=SHOW&db=:2432878&surname=Legeyt%2C+Jane+Anna](http://worldconnect.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=SHOW&db=:2432878&surname=Legeyt%2C+Jane+Anna) 10.06.07

On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2004 I commuted to Forth in Tasmania's North-West, and took part in *200 Footprints*,<sup>89</sup> a week of activities celebrating 200 years of settlement in the region. I had arranged a bonnet display in the Forth Hall, where local women, already involved in fashioning bonnets for my installation, sewed and embroidered bonnets and interacted with interested viewers. The display drew interest from both men and women within the community.<sup>90</sup>

Flyers asking for bonnet-makers were displayed in a variety of businesses and organisations in many towns, especially in rural districts. Generally, I approached craft shops or organisations with an interest in women's issues. Women Tasmania<sup>91</sup> were particularly obliging, with their staff handing out bonnet patterns and information to the public.

My concept regarding the actual form of the installation evolved from contemplation of the fact that the convict women who had so tragically lost their babies were yet denied any meaningful involvement in their babies' burials.

During my Honours research, I had spent time at cemeteries, both current and former. These included St. David's Park and Cornelian Bay in Hobart, and at the towns of Ross, Stanley and Bicheno. All of these sites contained elaborate memorials to young children, memorials that poignantly expressed the deep sense of loss experienced by the families grieving the early demise of their young.

The bonnets began arriving, sometimes individually and other times in larger quantities. Whole towns sent bonnets. People in quite isolated rural areas contacted

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<sup>89</sup> Bicentennial celebration of the settlement of the North West Coast of Tasmania. 2 – 7 Feb, 2004. [http://www.bicentenary.tas.gov.au/events/event\\_text.php?id=22](http://www.bicentenary.tas.gov.au/events/event_text.php?id=22) 02.12.06

<sup>90</sup> An Irish tourist spent some time discussing his country's history, providing some very salient comments on the life of the Irish poor in the 1800s, especially the women, many of whom became transportees to the female factories of Van Diemen's Land and other colonies. There was a constant stream of interaction with a very interested public, including the then-Tasmanian Premier, the Hon. Jim Bacon and his wife, Honey Bacon who, some weeks earlier, had accepted the invitation to open the event launching *Departures and Arrivals* at the Female Factory Historic Site on the 6<sup>th</sup> March.

<sup>91</sup> Government organisation that aims to ensure that women in Tasmania are fairly represented in policies and decisions. <http://www.women.tas.gov.au/> 09.06.07

me; somehow they had heard about my project. People kept arriving at the Female Factory Historic Site in South Hobart wanting to personally deliver their bonnets to me and although the hours involved in personal interaction with the community participants was time-consuming, it was very worthwhile.

The repetitive fabrication process assumed an art-performative dimension — though one without an audience. The act of ‘making’ encouraged meditation. I found myself thinking about the tedious nature of the repetitive work to which the convict women were subjected: weaving, spinning, carding;<sup>92</sup> the drudgery of endless washing.<sup>93</sup>

The public interaction was more responsive and touching than I could have imagined. A Tasmanian musician was inspired to compose *900 Babies*, a song that directly related to *Departures and Arrivals*.<sup>94</sup> Poems were written. Letters accompanying bonnets often held such emotionally charged words that I considered them too personal to exhibit. Deeply buried grief was disclosed, yet hopefully eased through the process of personal sharing. Participants wrote that closure had finally been afforded them through participation in *Departures and Arrivals*. Some descendants spoke of their sorrow regarding the injustices perpetrated upon their ancestors. I include a number of letters I received in the thesis exhibition.

Weeks earlier I had determined the precise location for the initial installation within the Yard One of the Female Factory. I wanted the bonnets’ backs directed toward the sandstone wall surrounding the yard, at a distance allowing for access for observers, and to be facing the site of the long-demolished Chapel, and toward the towering Mount Wellington, ominously near. I chose a corner of Yard One with these determinations in mind. It occurred to me that, directly beneath the bonnet installation, rubble from the nursery and the chapel might still remain.<sup>95</sup> I was also mindful of the fact that barely a few feet away from *Departures and Arrivals* was the location of Truganini’s temporary grave, that from which, two years after her burial in 1876, her remains were exhumed in particularly dreadful circumstances and relocated

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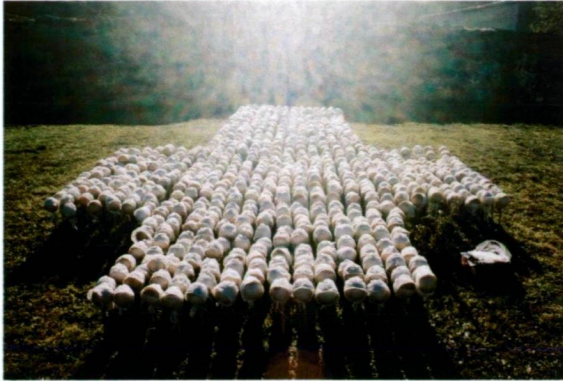
<sup>92</sup> [http://www.janesoceania.com/australia\\_bush\\_tales/index3.htm](http://www.janesoceania.com/australia_bush_tales/index3.htm) 09.06.07

<sup>93</sup> Lovell Chen (2007) p83.

<sup>94</sup> Trica Lain Noakes. Refer Appendix 2.

<sup>95</sup> Lovell Chen (2007), pp 69–70.

to the Tasmanian Museum.<sup>96</sup>



I printed out the names of all the babies born to convict women who had spent time in the Cascades Female Factory, and I enclosed these names in a bound black cloth book in the 1850s Matron's Cottage (acquired by the Female Factory Historic Site Board in 2002).<sup>97</sup> The name *Departures and Arrivals* was printed in gold on the front cover. I used gold to emphasise the preciousness of the babies' lives. Accompanying stories from bonnet-makers were available for inspection; these were held in plastic sleeved folders. As I had a surplus of bonnets, I displayed 100 bonnets within the cottage so that visitors could hold and examine the items closely.

Some of the bonnets I received were made from clothes only one generation removed from a female convict ancestor. Some women used lace to adorn their bonnets taken from dresses belonging to their grandmothers. There was an enormous variation in the embellishment of the bonnets, but in general they were unadorned statements.

With the astonishing number of bonnets arriving right up until the 6<sup>th</sup> March, I decided to further publicise *Departures and Arrivals* and entered some of the bonnets into the *Material Girl* exhibition at the Moonah Arts Centre (2004).<sup>98</sup> For this exhibition, I used two Perspex sheets that enveloped an assortment of bonnets arranged in the shape of a cross. I had designed the work to hang from the ceiling to allow a view of both the backs and fronts of the bonnets. Due to the weight of the Perspex, however, this method of hanging was impossible. A revised plan saw the

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<sup>96</sup> Lovell Chen (2007) p89.

<sup>97</sup> Included in Index.

[www.femalefactory.com.au](http://www.femalefactory.com.au) 12/11/06

<sup>98</sup> *Material Girl* is an art contest run annually by Women Tasmania to coincide with International Women's Day.



bonnets pinned to the wall.<sup>99</sup> I gathered more project-participants through exposure in this exhibition. Although at this stage I had sufficient bonnets I wanted the message to reach as large an audience as possible so that more people would have the opportunity to learn about the female convict story. Documentation of this smaller display accompanied the subsequent touring exhibition which travelled throughout the State as part of Tasmania Regional Arts six month-long touring exhibition.



At 7.30am on the 6<sup>th</sup> March 2004, the ABC TV crew from *Rewind* arrived at the Female Factory Historic Site ready to film my assembling of the bonnets in their cross formation.<sup>100</sup> The previous day the weather had been calm and sunny. On the 6<sup>th</sup> the skies opened: from the moment I placed the first bonnet into the ground it rained, and the downpour continued with vigour through the entire opening ceremony. One bystander commented that the heavens were crying on behalf of the babies' mistreatment.

Some months after the event, I came across a reference to *Departures and Arrivals* on the internet.<sup>101</sup> This, and other articles, have prompted women throughout the British Isles to make baby bonnets, which have continued to arrive.<sup>102</sup> These more recent bonnets will be presented in the thesis exhibition interspersed with the original bonnets.

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<sup>99</sup> <http://www.women.tas.gov.au/materialgirl04/gallery2004/gallery1.html> 06.03.07

<sup>100</sup> ABC *Rewind* presented by historian, producer and broadcaster Michael Cathcart, focused on Australian characters and events.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/rewind/> 04.06.07

<sup>101</sup> Peacock, R., 'In Memory of the Little Ones.' in *Gazette of the Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society* (UK), August 2004, Issue No 15, pp4-5. See Appendix 6

<sup>102</sup> The Mothers Institute. Mothers Institute Projects. 'Christina Henri 900 Bonnets.'  
[www.mothersinstitute.co.uk/projects/](http://www.mothersinstitute.co.uk/projects/) 31.07.07

People in attendance had travelled from various parts of Tasmania and the mainland to attend the initial installation of *Departures and Arrivals*. Immediately after the opening event, members of a local singing group, *Womansong*, lingered on in the drizzle and performed a song, sung in Swahili, and entitled *Paradise*.<sup>103</sup>



On 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2004, less than four weeks after its launch at the Cascades Female Factory Site, *Departures and Arrivals* opened at the Ross Female Factory Site, approximately 100 kilometres north of Hobart. During the preceding months, I had negotiated with the Tasmanian Wool Centre at Ross, which manages the Ross Female Factory Site,<sup>104</sup> for the installation to be presented there.

The ground at Ross was very different from that of the Cascades site in South Hobart. A sheep-grazing lease co-exists with the Ross site and, consequently, the land was devoid of grass, hard and covered by a dry powdery top surface. The specific area I had chosen on which to erect the installation was covered with prickly weeds and sheep manure which had to be removed before installing the bonnets. The arduous task of, literally, drilling holes into the ground was carried out with the assistance of members from the local community and friends from Hobart.

Photographers from the local newspaper, *The Midlands Herald*, and the Launceston paper, *The Examiner*, arrived to take pictures. I had hoped for aerial photography, but

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<sup>103</sup> Translated the words are:  
*In Paradise*  
*Where all the dead are living*  
*In Paradise*  
*Where all the dead are living*  
*In Paradise*  
*Where all the dead are living*  
*May we one day join them*  
*All there in Paradise*

<sup>104</sup> [www.taswoolcentre.com.au/contact.htm](http://www.taswoolcentre.com.au/contact.htm) 06.06.07



unfortunately the elevated work platform that I had organised through Aurora Energy failed to materialise, due to the need for Aurora to use the device to repair fallen power lines, brought down by strong winds. Thus the photographers worked from the cabin roof of a utility.



The following afternoon the celebrations took place in sunshine. Members of the local community, many of whom had made bonnets, and participants from further afield joined in to pay tribute to convict women and their babies, especially paying respect to those who had lived, and died, at the Ross Female Factory.<sup>105</sup>



The bonnets remained at Ross for some weeks before being packed into cartons and returned to Hobart awaiting the courier service which transported them to the Burnie Regional Art Gallery for their month-long visit from 18<sup>th</sup> June — 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2004.

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<sup>105</sup> Parks and Wildlife Service, Historic Heritage Officer, Jo Lyngcolm, opened the event, and Christina Sonneman, a Tasmanian harpist who lives in the neighbouring township of Tunbridge, played her harp and sang lullabies.

A post-graduate student from Sydney, whose research related to the study of babies, had contacted me some weeks earlier and subsequently attended the event. During the opening ceremony I met Kim Peart. Peart, a fellow artist, who, in his own monthly newsletter, subsequently published an article on the Ross *Departures and Arrivals* experience. See Appendix7

Members of the Burnie branch of the Embroiders Guild of Tasmania had sewn a number of bonnets, likewise members of the Central Coast Branch, in Ulverstone. It was important to me that *Departures and Arrivals* be exhibited in an art gallery that would provide relatively easy access for these rurally isolated bonnet makers. I was delighted when the offer was made for the work to be installed in the Burnie Regional Art Gallery. The exhibition opening of *Departures and Arrivals* at this venue saw men and women gather from Circular Head, Wynyard and other centres on the North West Coast. It was a significant experience for the local women seeing their bonnets displayed as part of a contemporary art installation within Burnie's most prestigious art gallery.

The local newspaper, *The Advocate*, wrote two articles profiling the installation. On this occasion the bonnets were installed inside. Consequently, the wooden dowels that supported the polystyrene balls were inserted into the holes of base-plates, specifically produced to allow for interior presentations of the work, assembled side-by-side on the gallery floor.



Over a hundred people attended the opening, during which I presented an address. One member of the community had brought along a precious family christening bonnet heirloom which she placed alongside the 900 bonnets. The brand-new teddy bear that had been left by a member of the public to 'guard' the bonnets at Ross was also placed nearby. On the walls surrounding the installation I had set out a visual journey of the installation's story thus far. In viewing the photographs taken on the day, my focus has been drawn toward the earnestness of women's gazes as each searched for 'her' bonnet amongst the nine hundred.



After Burnie, *Departures and Arrivals* travelled to Tasmania's East Coast where it was exhibited at the Escape Wilderness Café and Gallery in St Mary's as part of Tasmanian Living Artists Week. The gallery space was the perfect size for the installation. On a polished wooden floor, surrounded by white walls and a high wooden ceiling, the bonnets nestled with just enough room for the public to walk round with ease and engage with the work. Once again, I utilised the walls to provide documentation of the installation's journey, and, as at all the sites, a special book was left for the public to record their responses to the installation and its subject.



The St Mary's experience was truly memorable. A resident, newly arrived from Sydney, described it as a most inspiring experience. He was surprised that the project had attracted so much community support. The St Helen's community radio and two local newspapers had given free publicity and many residents from towns within the municipality had journeyed to attend the opening of the exhibition. Local Aboriginal elder Gloria Andrews gave the *Welcome to Country*, surprising me with a posy.



The bonnets remained at the Escape Wilderness Cafe Gallery for two weeks before being transferred in August to the historic Highfield homestead site in Stanley, in the State's far North-West.<sup>106</sup> This property had once housed assigned female convicts

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<sup>106</sup> <http://www.historic-highfield.com.au/home.html> 06.04.07

and, as such, was an especially appropriate site for *Departures and Arrivals*. I chose to display the 900 bonnets in the small chapel on the property. I felt it appropriate to install the bonnet tribute within a space designed for worship.<sup>107</sup>

The next section of the bonnets' journey saw them travel to George Town, where they were installed on a property privately owned by Dianne Phillips and Mark Graham.<sup>108</sup> Historian Dianne Phillips had contacted me, asking if I would install *Departures and Arrivals* on her land. It transpired that the site had once housed the original residence of the first chaplain in the north of Van Diemen's Land, the Reverend John Youl, and was later used to accommodate female convicts. The installation of *Departures and Arrivals* was being timed to coincide with the local 'Back to George Town' (Tasmanian) Bicentennial celebrations (November 13–15, 2004). Though this would be a 'mere' two-day exhibition, the experience had produced an undeniably brilliant display of community collaboration, generosity and interest.

Upon arriving at the venue, I met with a group of women who had made bonnets and who were enthusiastically offering further assistance. I had become used to erecting the installation with minimal assistance and had a fair understanding of how long the work took to assemble.

I had requested an elevated work platform, which was organised through Temtrol Technologies and, as with Hazell Bros' generous assistance at the first exhibition in South Hobart, they donated a staff member's time and use of the machine without charge. The elevated work platform arrived and some of the local bonnet-makers braved the height and acted as official photographers. The George Town Council photographer was also in attendance.

The installation was officially opened by the General Manager of Operations at the local giant Comalco works, Xiaoling Liu, a Chinese who spoke with great empathy of migration and separation.

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<sup>107</sup> A local women's *a capella* group, *Fully Dilated and Pushing*, sang a suite of lullabies. Mary Binks, former Mayor of Devonport, herself a descendant of a female convict, opened the exhibition. Mary Binks was elected to the Devonport Council in 1989, serving two years as deputy Mayor and four years as Mayor. In 2005 Mary Binks was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for service to local government and promotion of women's affairs.

<sup>108</sup> Mark Graham died in 2006.

An Irish composer/musician, Vince Brophy, had composed a tribute to *Departures and Arrivals* — *900 Bonnets*,<sup>109</sup> which he included on a CD that the local George Town Council had contracted him to write to mark the installation of *Departures and Arrivals*.<sup>110</sup> He and his band, *Three Card Trick*, performed *900 Bonnets* at the Opening, and local singer Carla Coogan sang a Brahms' lullaby, unaccompanied, as the final tribute before rose petals were scattered over the bonnets. A group of local children, *Trindy Hogan's Patrice Dancers* performed a dance, each wearing a bonnet made from an amended baby bonnet pattern. Hundreds of people attended the Opening and spent time looking at the bonnets and writing in the comments book I provided. I was interviewed for local radio and gave a talk at a different site. The previous day Launceston ABC Radio presenter, Ann Fitzgerald, had interviewed me and I was later to hear from a number of people that they had heard about *Departures and Arrivals* through that particular broadcast.<sup>111</sup>



I had no budget to take *Departures and Arrivals* to George Town but with support from the local council and the generosity of many residents of the town I was able to spend four days there, erecting the work and then removing it, with the knowledge that help was at hand when I required it. Two women from George Town who had made bonnets and participated in the installing of the 900 bonnets continued their assistance by transporting some of the bonnets back to Hobart ready for their next exhibition. A Tasmanian Bicentenary Office article, published in the 2004-2005 Annual Report for the Government Departments of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts, spoke of the community arts projects that had featured in the George Town celebrations. This would have been an indirect reference to *Departures and*

<sup>109</sup> Now an Australian resident living in Victoria. [www.vincebrophy.com](http://www.vincebrophy.com). 08.06.07

<sup>110</sup> Brophy, V., *Between the Moon and the Sun*, George Town Council, Tasmania, 2004. <http://www.artsconnect.com.au/artists/musicians/vincebrophy.htm> 08.06.07 Refer Appendix 8.

<sup>111</sup> <http://www.abc.net.au/tasmania/stories/s1242376.htm>



*Arrivals*.<sup>112</sup> A later article included in the Tasmanian Bicentenary Office dedicated two-thirds of a page to information and an image of *Departures and Arrivals*.<sup>113</sup>

From the significant community interest shown towards *Departures and Arrivals* in George Town, a request was made for a permanent installation to be erected in the town's historic Watch House, the old police station where convict women would have walked to and fro on occasions, across the town centre, to the female factory site in Cimitiere Street. On the 12<sup>th</sup> June I attended a Female Factory Research Group Meeting at the Matron's Cottage, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, where three George Town members spoke about their current female convict research.<sup>114</sup> Lorraine Wootton spoke at length about the 2004 *Departures and Arrivals* experience in their town and relayed how a small room in the Watch House had been allocated for a permanent display of information, bonnets and looped video footage of the event.

Eventually, on the June 30, 2006 this permanent display — professionally produced — was opened. A room in the Watch House once planned for male enterprises was now devoted to focusing on the lives of female convicts and would remain so! Watch House staff have reported visitors being visibly moved when viewing the work. I continue to receive correspondence from some of those visitors in relation to the installation.



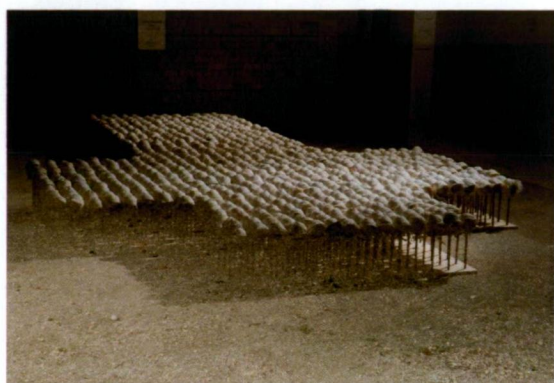
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<sup>112</sup> [http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/\\_media/\\_pdf/annual\\_reports/2004\\_05/2004-2005\\_DTPHA\\_AnnualReport.pdf](http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/_media/_pdf/annual_reports/2004_05/2004-2005_DTPHA_AnnualReport.pdf) p51. 08.06.07

<sup>113</sup> [http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/\\_media/\\_pdf/annual\\_reports/2003\\_04/6\\_bur\\_tas\\_bicentenary\\_office.pdf](http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/_media/_pdf/annual_reports/2003_04/6_bur_tas_bicentenary_office.pdf) p21. 08.06.07

<sup>114</sup> Female Factory Research Group secretary Alison Alexander's minutes documenting meeting with George Town members' contribution.

The Tasmanian Bicentennial Committee approached me regarding *Departures and Arrivals*' inclusion in their concluding exhibition, *Celebrate Your Story*, to be held at the Bond Store, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, from 10th December 2004 to the end of February 2005 — a period of some twelve weeks. Reportedly, thousands of people visited this exhibition that documented some of the events that had marked the Bicentennial year. *Departures and Arrivals* was positioned in a central position within the Bond Store and was the largest individual piece among all the works presented. At the conclusion of *Celebrate Your Story* I packed the bonnets back into their containers ready for transportation to their next venue — the Tasmanian Design Centre, Launceston.



I accepted an invitation to install *Departures & Arrivals* at the Tasmanian Design Centre in a joint exhibition with Melbourne photographer Bronek Kozka. Some years earlier, Bronek, of Polish descent, had visited his homeland, and during a tour of Auschwitz had taken photographs which had remained undeveloped. Now developed, these photographs triggered memories of the Holocaust, symbolising atrocity and genocide.<sup>115</sup> His work, with its dark stark imagery, was juxtaposed with the softness of the pristine bonnets. Both works spoke of intolerable suffering, but viewers were offered two very different ways of honouring victims. Opening the exhibition, the then-Mayor of Launceston, Janie Dickenson, directed her comments toward the relevance of art as an instrument that can invite reflection on difficult subjects.

Originally, *Departures and Arrivals* was to be installed at the Design Centre from May 10<sup>th</sup> to 26 June 2005, but it was late July before the exhibition was dismantled. The installation was housed in a room that led off the larger first gallery space that accommodated *Auschwitz Revisited*. The gallery visitor could stand in a variety of

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<sup>115</sup> <http://www.auschwitz.org.pl/html/eng/start/index.php> 22.05.07



spaces in the room where Bronek's work was displayed and not only view his photography but also catch glimpses of a section of *Departures and Arrivals* in the adjoining room.

In this exhibition I added additional items that had been made by the public as a response to *Departures and Arrivals*.<sup>116</sup> These items and some images of the Cascades Female Factory Site, South Hobart, were introduced into the Design Centre exhibition as new material.

During the exhibition opening, photographs were taken of the 900 cloth-bonnets reflected in the glass doors leading out to a courtyard. The resulting images of the bonnets' reflection, seemingly hovering above the crushed stone courtyard outside, created an eerie, ghost-like apparition. This image was later used in the Design Centre of Tasmania's Spring edition brochure.<sup>117</sup> The brochure also contained an image of the bonnets in an article discussing *Auschwitz Revisited* and *Departures and Arrivals*.



In December 2006 I drove to Port Arthur Historic Site where the bonnets were to be exhibited outdoors on a grassy knoll just a few metres away from the well-preserved Policeman's House. I was extremely pleased to be granted permission to install *Departures and Arrivals* at Port Arthur. I believe that restricting the Port Arthur focus solely upon male convicts is limiting. As was pointed out in the Site's own newsletter,

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<sup>116</sup> I had been approached by a Tasmanian calligrapher, Olive Bull, [Limited edition books in the Australian National Gallery and the New South Wales Gallery] who had seen *Departures and Arrivals* and, as a consequence, had produced a fold-out artist's book. The book was bound in black and the pages were white and a small baby's bonnet acted as a cover for her book. Another gift came from one of the bonnet makers who attended the George Town event. Petah Harley, who had spent time videoing from the elevated work platform at the George Town event, subsequently designed, hand sewed and embroidered a calico bag with lace and rose petals that she had gathered from the ground at the installation site. The resulting bag became the receptacle for the video of the proceedings at George Town.

<sup>117</sup> Wootton, A., *Design lines*, 2005, Spring edition, No 6, p2&p4.



*The Port Arthur Post*, on the 25<sup>th</sup> November in an article written by staff member Sarah Quine, the other side of the coin reflects the role that women played in the male convicts' lives.<sup>118</sup> Women and children had been left behind and new relationships had been forged within Australia, sometimes resulting in the birth of a child. One might also speculate that *Departures* and *Arrivals* paid tribute to babies from such relationships. Their incarcerated fathers may have never known of their existence, nor of their deaths.

I contacted musician Kate North, who accepted the invitation to sing at the opening at Port Arthur. Kate is the daughter of poet and author Margaret Scott.<sup>119</sup> Scott had written a novel, set in colonial times, entitled *The Baby Farmer* which I had researched early in 2004. The song that Kate chose to perform, unaccompanied was *Hymn to Her*. A few words were altered to befit the occasion. The knowledge that this was the song that she had sung at her mother's memorial service earlier in the year was deeply moving.

I had quite a long conversation with ABC broadcaster Chris Wisbey on his weekend show, broadcast that Sunday from Port Arthur when *Departures and Arrivals* was installed. This broadcast prompted a number of people to drive to Port Arthur to see the bonnets in situ. Staff at the Port Arthur Historic Site subsequently kept an eye on the installation and accompanying documentation, which I set up in one of the rooms of the Policeman's Cottage. I gave information to the guides and they incorporated the artwork in their tours. During the setting-up and also on the other occasions I was on site, many visitors questioned me about the installation.<sup>120</sup> I made two trips to the site during the exhibition to check on the condition of the bonnets and on both occasions I spent hours pulling up weeds and grass growing vigorously around and through the bonnets. The photographs I took on the day my son and I dismantled the

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<sup>118</sup> Quine, S., *Departures and Arrivals*, Port Arthur Post, 25 November, 2005, p7.  
<http://www.portarthur.org.au/pdfs/C14266.12COF.PAPost%2025.11.05.pdf> 08.06.07

<sup>119</sup> Dr Margaret Scott, (1934-2005). □ Poet and author, former head of the English Department at the University of Tasmania, and resident of the Tasman Peninsula.  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/lifematters/stories/2006/1623430.htm> 10.06.07  
In 2000 Margaret was appointed to the board of the Port Arthur Historic Site Management Authority, Board member - Tasman Institute of Conservation and Convict Studies.  
[http://www.women.tas.gov.au/significantwomen/search/margaret\\_scott.html](http://www.women.tas.gov.au/significantwomen/search/margaret_scott.html) 10.06.07

<sup>120</sup> An interpretive board had been set up adjacent to the bonnets, but people really wanted to interact with the artist. From that contact some people made bonnets and one lady from Sweden still keeps in touch.

installation show the bonnets peeking up through grass, weeds and flowers. The unpredictable summer weather experienced during the weeks of *Departures and Arrivals*' sojourn had affected the bonnet material, which had deteriorated. Many of the bonnets were dirty and some had become mouldy. As we packed the bonnets into their cartons I contemplated their longevity.

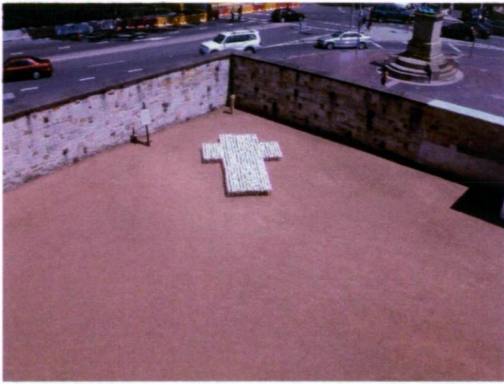
*Departures and Arrivals* was due to travel to Sydney in the first week in February 2006 ready for installation by the 12<sup>th</sup> of that month at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum. This site, designed by convict architect Francis Greenway and built between 1817 and 1819, has housed a few female convicts for brief periods of time. These women were in transit from the Queensland female factory site at Moreton Bay and were detained solely for processing purposes to determine whether they were assigned convicts or secondary offenders.



I had five weeks to restore the bonnets from their state of decay. Nine hundred bonnets required a major overhaul. The repairing of the bonnets is a story in itself.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> The following details explain the venture succinctly. The bonnets, having been removed from the polystyrene balls, were washed in the bath. Napisan was used initially but was not strong enough so was replaced with a bleach. The work was done in batches and repeated several times. Following on from this process every bonnet was hand washed as they were too frail to machine wash. Plastic-covered garden wire became the framework on which the bonnets were placed to dry. Eventually a hammock fashioned from fruit tree netting became the makeshift drying rack. Approximately eighty bonnets fitted on each of these 'beds' at a time. Only one windless day offered an opportunity for the bonnets to dry in the sun on the makeshift frames. It was a matter of trial and error, as heavy wind blew the bonnets off wire. Other than that, the bonnets dried on frames erected in a large space under the house. Once the bonnets were dry the repair work began. Snipping the shredded cotton and ribbon and sewing any torn material on almost nine hundred bonnets was time consuming but with the help of a few dedicated ladies these tasks were completed. Then the 900 bonnets required ironing, after which they were placed on the polystyrene balls. My friend and I worked day and night to complete the task in time. By the time the bonnets were being placed on the polystyrene balls we were grateful for the additional hands that my friend's two granddaughters lent to the occasion.



I had three helpers to install the bonnets in Sydney. The Hyde Park Barracks Museum organised the transport, travel and accommodation, as well as the design and implementation of the interpretive panels. We spent two days placing the bonnets in the courtyard, with a temporary fence around us. This did not deter the passers-by who constantly questioned us about what we were doing. As we placed the pristine bonnets onto the red soil, I decided I would never repeat the process of laundering the bonnets. I found myself questioning the sanity of my decision to exhibit the bonnets in the courtyard after the groundsman who was assisting us told me the rats that occupied the grounds at night were bigger than the bonnets and no doubt would use the calico for nesting material. This did not eventuate.

I was fortunate that my three helpers were also accomplished photographers and filmmakers; thus the installing of the bonnets was well documented. Aerial photography was also made easy, as access from a nearby multi-storeyed building afforded some excellent images. Resultant pictures show the whiteness of the bonnets strikingly contrasted with the red gravel of the courtyard.

The Hyde Park Barracks Museum, situated in the heart of Sydney, has a constant stream of visitors and the courtyard is used as a thoroughfare for the general public as well as a place for contemplation. There are park benches dotted throughout the site and whilst we were setting up *Departures and Arrivals* a number of people were taking advantage of the seats to observe us at work.



Staff-members at the site were briefed about the art. Tours of schoolchildren who regularly spend a day on-site re-enacting colonial life would be offered the opportunity to engage with the installation.

*Departures and Arrivals* was removed from the Hyde Park Barracks Museum courtyard at the end of April, 2006. We swept over the courtyard, removing the large amount of leaf and other litter that had become trapped within the installation. The white bonnets had made a notable imprint on the landscape. Following the removal of *Departures and Arrivals*, a virtual after-image of the installation lingered in the courtyard. The Historic Houses Trust website has continued to publicise the event.



The approach that I have taken with *Departures and Arrivals* has been to facilitate opportunities for the broader community to interact with the work, not only in terms of viewing it, but in its actual production. To that end I have exhibited the work throughout Tasmania and organised venues for mainland shows. Permanent displays of variations of *Departures and Arrivals* have been set up. Parks and Wildlife Services Tasmania,<sup>122</sup> for example, have financed a fixed exhibition at the Commandant's Cottage, Ross Female Factory Historic Site. The W.F. Booth Gallery, in the Matron's Cottage of the Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart houses a considerable collection relating to *Departures and Arrivals*. In the north of the State, the George Town Council has sponsored a permanent display at the historic Watch House.<sup>123</sup> As well as interpretive panels and a glass case housing some of the baby bonnets made by women in the district, a DVD of *Departures and Arrivals*' setting-up, opening event and dismantling can be viewed on a TV monitor.

<sup>122</sup> Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage and the Arts.

<sup>123</sup> George Town Council Annual Report 2004/2005.  
[www.georgetown.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=243](http://www.georgetown.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=243) 1.07.07

## Chapter Three

### Artistic Context

In researching the work of contemporary artists I have chosen practitioners whose work I consider to contain common bonds with my own practice. In exploring these artists' work I seek to align my own art practice, to discover where my art 'sits' within the broad sphere of contemporary practice.

#### List of artists:

- Vivienne Binns
- Anne Ferran
- Julie Gough
- Julie Blyfield, Sue Lorraine and Catherine Truman
- Maya Lin
- Anthony Gormley
- Olafur Eliasson
- Christian Boltanski
- Ann Hamilton
- Christo and Jeanne Claude
- Kim Sooja

Throughout the career of Vivienne Binns there appear a variety of approaches and media, yet within these different areas common concerns are apparent. Much of her work explores what it means to be an artist in Australia, with local and European histories engaging with cultures in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>124</sup> Over the past decade, Binns has explored images of colonial conquest and settlement in the Pacific. Paintings like *Hodges, Termites and Landscape*, 2002 and *A Trace of Parkinson and Other Devices*, 2003 are works in which Binns has focused on details from topographic engravings made by the artists of James Cook's voyages. The resulting works produce startling metaphors of contemporary cultural and political anxiety.

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<sup>124</sup> [www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/artistprofile.php?id=19-7k](http://www.suttongallery.com.au/artists/artistprofile.php?id=19-7k) – 20.05.07

Binns' studio works contrast dramatically with her achievements as a community artist in west-central New South Wales. Binns has travelled throughout a 60,000 square mile range, working amidst a population of 200,000.<sup>125</sup> Her valuing of women's craft has greatly assisted in the recognition of community arts. Binns embraces all forms of handiwork, such as knitting, embroidery and weaving, so often viewed with indifference and as lacking in craftsmanship.

Of her own work Vivienne Binns reflects:

*I became fascinated by the forces which act to define values and set up the boundaries such as between amateur and professional, tasteful and tasteless, art and craft, good and bad, and artifacts etc.*

*I became as respectful of the amateur and maker of marginalised art forms as of the professional and specially trained. I learnt how the domestic and private worked in relation to the official and public, and how gender acted as a defining marker in a social structure where women and the work they did were often disadvantaged.<sup>126</sup>*

*Full Flight – Views of life in the Central Western region of NSW through the creative expression of those who live there* was a marathon venture undertaken in the Central Western region of New South Wales. Binns worked for two-and-a half years as artist-in-community within the region. With a caravan in tow, she travelled enormous distances, visiting industrial towns such as Lithgow and less sparsely populated rural areas such as Lake Carnelligo. The resultant art linked the disparate communities. Binns assembled mementos of everyday life in newsletters that included stories, poems and artwork. This documentation became content for works involving processes such as enamelling and silkscreen printing, which Binns taught within the various communities. She developed a strong personal association with all involved. Her taping of oral histories validated the lives of 'ordinary women' within the respective communities.

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<sup>125</sup> Kunda, M., 'The Artist, the Community and the Land, in Clark, D., Dean C., et al *Vivienne Binns*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania, 2006, p20.

<sup>126</sup> Australian National Capital Artist Inc. [http://www.anca.canberra.net.au/artist\\_profile.php?id=59](http://www.anca.canberra.net.au/artist_profile.php?id=59) 20.05.07

I feel particularly inspired by Binns' collaborative approach. I draw certain parallels with my own work, *Departures and Arrivals*, where the reliance on contributors' participation is essential.

Binns' imaginative *Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories* postcard project, shown in a variety of social settings, typifies her art practice within communities. This work was also included in the 1982 Sydney Biennale. Her enthusiasm has been infectious, inspiring responses from the many women involved, and motivating them to produce work they may never have previously considered possible. The words on participant Grace Oldfield's postcard, designed in connection with *Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories*, enunciates perfectly the regard she felt for her mentor.<sup>127</sup> Binns' attitude ignited a belief within those engaged in the process that their creativity was important and that they were not simply ordinary folk with talents restricted to lesser-valued, 'womanly' crafts.<sup>128</sup>

In conversation with Vivienne Binns I asked whether she had ever focused on the lives of convict women. She reflected that, whilst she had never consciously explored this issue, she suspected that some of the Blacktown women engaged in the project may have had memories of convict forebears upon whom *they* reflected during their involvement in *Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories*. In subsequent correspondence from her, however, Binns recalled that, when a student at the East Sydney Technical College (now the National Art School), she was indeed fascinated by the building's history as a jail, built by convicts, and which contained women's cells that still existed beneath one of the buildings.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *To the Viewers,  
For the past 12 mths  
I have been working on this project.  
But Binnsey doesn't think we  
Worked hard enough. Talk about a  
Slave driver!! It has really been the most enjoyable,  
Learning this unique process,  
Thanks Viv – love Grace!*

<sup>128</sup> Clark, D., Dean, C., et al, (2006), p18.

<sup>129</sup> Personal email from Vivienne Binns, 25 April 2007.

Binn's strenuous embracing of community involvement, especially that of women, not only stimulates participants' imagination but also the interest of the art world. In doing so, as Christopher Dean suggests in his *Language of Abstraction*, Binns has opened up the potential for artists to develop new skills in involving members of the public, people who held no expectations of identifying as artists.<sup>130</sup> As she recalls, it was in 1972 that Binns first addressed the notion of an 'artist in community', defining this role as one in which an artist's interaction with other people forms an integral element in the artist's own practice, one that could be described as a practice of exchange.<sup>131</sup>

Australian artist Anne Ferran has highlighted the plight of convict women and their babies in her series, *Lost to Worlds*. Photographer and academic, Ferran also combines video to create installations through photomedia processes. Her work reflects upon a vanished past.<sup>132</sup> Exhibited in 2001, *Lost to Worlds* was a combination of photographs that Ferran had taken over a number of years at the Ross Female Factory — the same site in which *Departures and Arrivals* was installed during April 2004.<sup>133</sup> Ferran photographed the site at various times of the year. In *Lost to Worlds*, her images, with their characteristic muted tones that evoke an ethereal air suggestive of ghostly presences from a vanished past, are interspersed with details of photographs taken by celebrated Tasmanian photographer John Watt Beattie (1859 — 1930). Ferran's images link us with the women and children whose lives were once lived on this soil.

In 1995, Ferran and fellow-artist Ann Brennan undertook a study of female inmates of the Hyde Park Barracks Asylum for the Infirm and Destitute and Immigrants Depot (built c.1817–1819). The exhibition, *Secure the Shadow* (1995) was the outcome of this collaborative investigation. It offered the public an alternative story to that

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<sup>130</sup> Dean, C., 'Vivienne Binns' *Language of Abstraction*, in Clark, D., Dean, D., et al, (2007) p29

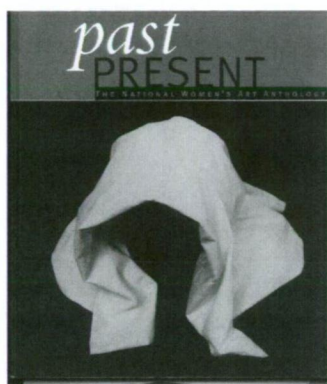
<sup>131</sup> Artists statement. [http://www.anca.canberra.net.au/artist\\_profile.php?id=59](http://www.anca.canberra.net.au/artist_profile.php?id=59) 20.06.07

<sup>132</sup> [www.stillsgallery.com.au/artists/ferran/index.php?obj\\_id=about&nav=0](http://www.stillsgallery.com.au/artists/ferran/index.php?obj_id=about&nav=0) - 20k - 06.03.07

<sup>133</sup> The Ross site incorporates a somewhat mysterious mound of earth. Archaeological digs have shown that, underneath this mound, a nursery once existed. In her report of July 1988, Dr Eleanor C. Casella, Project Director of the Ross Female Factory Archaeology Project, discusses the existence of a nursery ward that housed the convict women's babies. [www.parks.tas.gov.au/publications/tech/rossarch/arch.html](http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/publications/tech/rossarch/arch.html) -



proffered in the more familiar triumphalist histories, one instead of loss and silence.<sup>134</sup> The exhibition comprised a series of handmade artist's books by Brennan and Ferran's *Soft Caps*, a collection of silver gelatin photographs.<sup>135</sup> Ferran's images arose from her viewing of a convict women's cotton cap in the Barracks' archaeological collection and, subsequently, her finding a photograph of female inmates wearing similar caps at Newington Asylum.<sup>136</sup> Ferran would have been as captivated by the cap, I suspect, as I had been with my discovery of the baby christening bonnets at Narryna.



In *Soft Caps* Ferran presents allusions to female heads covered by cloth caps. However, through her use of black, the specific identities of the women are obscured. The blackness that is the voided face merges with the black background and contrasts sharply with the starkly white fabric draped loosely, simulating a veil. The viewer gazes at a virtually faceless woman. Ferran's compelling photographs evoke the convict women's own sense of nothingness. Of their investigations, Ferran and Brennan write:

*We know more about the women now than at the outset, but not much more, since there is so little to learn. Little in the way of facts and figures, and a lot of material evidence that is incoherent ... Of the filthy rags in the collection, it turns out, surprisingly, that their muteness and formlessness is their eloquence. They tell us finally that there is no "story", only fragments. Not "their" story any more, only our own story (about them).*<sup>137</sup>

<sup>134</sup> *Dea(r)th*, mixed media. [www.hht.net.au/collections/art\\_at\\_the\\_properties/anne\\_brennan](http://www.hht.net.au/collections/art_at_the_properties/anne_brennan) – 25.02.07

<sup>135</sup> 38x34.5 [www.hht.net.au/collections/art\\_at\\_the\\_properties/anne\\_ferran2](http://www.hht.net.au/collections/art_at_the_properties/anne_ferran2) – 25.02.07

<sup>136</sup> First buildings on site acquired for use as an Asylum built in 1886 housed 300 women. [www.sydneypark.com.au/education\\_and\\_learning/history/colonial\\_history](http://www.sydneypark.com.au/education_and_learning/history/colonial_history) – 25.02.07

<sup>137</sup> [www.hht.net.au/collections/art\\_at\\_the\\_properties/anne\\_ferran\\_2](http://www.hht.net.au/collections/art_at_the_properties/anne_ferran_2) 25.02.07

In 2007 Ferran was invited to exhibit at Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania, as part of the Port Arthur Project.<sup>138</sup> Her *In the ground, on the air* (2006) pays tribute to 715 babies, born to convict women, who died within their first year of life during the years 1828 –1856. Ferran represented this group of babies by small blanket-like textiles. The blankets were hung from the ceiling to allow for the best view of the two letters woven on each that represented the first two letters of the illness the baby died from — (e.g. *pn* represented *pneumonia*). The diseases Ferran chose represented some of the most common forms of illnesses responsible for causing the babies' deaths. A second component of the installation involved the names of the babies, 715 in all, who did not live beyond a year of their life. Ferran signified the length of the baby's life by synchronising the amount of time in which the letters remained visible as they moved across the wall of the building in which the work was displayed. The fading letters echoed a baby's diminishing life.<sup>139</sup> Visitors were invited to speak the babies' names out loud. These names may have been imprisoned in silence for a very long time. Uttering the names connected the present to the past.<sup>140</sup>

Julie Gough's art derives from her socio-cultural concerns. She has produced a prodigious body of work, generally focused upon her own Aboriginal ancestors' colonial experience. She visually narrates a journey through the minefield of coded social complexities. Installations such as *Operation Aloha! Magnum-as-Cook in the Time/Space Continuum* (1999) juxtapose members of Gough's own family with a Captain Cook commemorative telephone book and other memorabilia. This work captures the containment of a people within an Australian history that has largely omitted the indigenous story. *The Whispering Sands (Ebb Tide)* (1998) is a powerful installation, located in shallow tidal water, comprising sixteen life-size portraits. These are images, burnt manually into plywood, of major European colonial identities

<sup>138</sup> Port Arthur project, 16 March – 15 April 2007. *Ten Days on the Island* initiative.

<sup>139</sup> Port Arthur project catalogue. Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart, Tasmania, 2007, p6.

<sup>140</sup> Anne Ferran was invited to exhibit *In the Ground, on the air* in the 2006 Clemenger Contemporary Art Prize at the National Gallery of Victoria. In this work Ferran used two monitors displaying names of babies born to convict women who only lived in their first year. The babies names — 715 in total — slowly moved across the screens, reaching a specified distance on the monitor depending on their age. The audience was invited to speak the names of the babies out loud to coincide with their appearance on the screen. In 2004 I chose to include the names of 900 babies, known to have died to convict women within the Cascades Female Factory system, to accompany the *Departures and Arrivals* exhibition. In my thesis exhibition the names are more prominently displayed. The viewer will have the opportunity to gaze at a wall of names and therefore engage to a greater degree with the enormity of the loss of so many young lives.

who, historically, had impacted significantly - and negatively - upon the Tasmanian Aboriginal people.<sup>141</sup> Depending on the level of the tide, the presence of these figures was either apparent or almost illusory.



Within Gough's art an opening is also created that entreats the viewer to question the mistreatment of various marginalised and oppressed groups within the white society. 'Home sweet Home' (1999; dimensions 6m x 6m) is an installation of cotton, pins, timber and soap.

Gough was invited to exhibit in Liverpool, England in 1999. Travelling to the UK, she initially researched the forced transportation of exiled convicts and children to the Australian colonies. Yet, ironically, it was the children left behind in Liverpool orphanages that endeared themselves to her heart.<sup>142</sup>

Gough has described how six stones huddled together in a Liverpool cemetery caught her attention. Damp and nettle-fringed, partially hidden, without any embellishment, they blandly, dispassionately listed the names of 122 dead children.<sup>143</sup> In 'Home sweet Home', Gough created a virtual memorial to these children. The work took the form of a soft bed of pillows, upon which the names of the children were picked out in dressmakers' pins. The thousands of pins that outline the names are embedded deep into the pillows so that only the pin-heads are visible. The effect is one of precious silver.

<sup>141</sup> [http://colonial.arts.utas.edu.au/old\\_caia\\_site/juliegough/](http://colonial.arts.utas.edu.au/old_caia_site/juliegough/) 17.06.07

<sup>142</sup> Specifically the orphans held within the former Orphanages: The Bluecoat Hospital, The Liverpool Infant Orphan Asylum, The Liverpool Female Orphan Asylum and The Liverpool Boys' Orphan Asylum

<sup>143</sup> Gough, J., *Transforming histories: The Visual disclosure of contentious pasts*. University of Tasmania, Hobart 2001.

The addition within the work of lavender-scented soap added another layer of meaning. The lavender soap epitomised maternal attention, a mother's love: qualities lacking in these orphans' lives. It also invoked the link between Board members of the Bluecoat Hospital and slavery: Board members actually forced orphan boys on to slave ships involved in the lucrative palm oil industry.

Adelaide's West Terrace Cemetery Baby Memorial (2000), stemmed from the campaign of a mother who felt denied an appropriate cultural symbol that would serve as a physical embodiment of respect and encourage contemplation and opportunity to grieve for lost young lives. In response to this campaign, the relevant statutory bodies commissioned artists Julie Blyfield, Sue Lorraine and Catherine Truman to design an appropriate memorial.<sup>144</sup>

Until the early 1980s an area on the western side of the cemetery was the site for the interment of stillborn and perinatal babies. All interments were in 'common ground' and involved either massed burials or repeated re-use. The exact number of interments appears to be unknown but estimates suggested 30,000.<sup>145</sup> Hospital procedure saw the dead babies removed from their mothers and brought down to the cemetery by an undertaker under contract. It was common practice for parents to remain ignorant of their babies' fate. Some parents subsequently sought information on their babies' whereabouts and through cemetery records located approximate interment positions.<sup>146</sup>

No memorial was ever officially permitted, as each grave contained many unconnected bodies and the plots were unlicensed. Nevertheless, a few simple 'folk' monuments were established over the years. These tributes were considered illegal, although no effort was made to remove them. The West Terrace Cemetery Project Brief for the new memorial stated that:

*The barren state of the site with the few illegal memorials creates a very poignant setting. This section of the Cemetery is an important historical site from a social and cultural perspective and has been identified in a*

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<sup>144</sup> The West Terrace Cemetery Trust in Association with the Department of Human Services and the heritage arm of the Department of Administrative and Information Services

<sup>145</sup> Layther, J., *West Terrace Cemetery Baby Memorial Registration of Interest*, Department of the Arts and Cultural development, Adelaide, 1996, p1.

<sup>146</sup> Layther, J., (1996) p1.



*recent development guidelines report as a site that should be conserved and subject to appropriate interpretation.*<sup>147</sup>

Blyfield, Lorraine and Truman chose a location close to the site of the unmarked graves so that the latter could be seen as an integral part of the new memorial.



The memorial includes a seated area that allows for quiet repose. Bronze plaques set into clay tiles give the impression of scattered leaves, each fallen leaf a reminder of a baby lost. A granite and bronze sculptural evocation of a font, decorated with a broken daisy chain that rests on the shrine's smooth top, evokes memories of childhood aspiration.<sup>148</sup> In my own conversation with her, Julie Blyfield has described how parents have left flowers, cards, soft toys and cherubs at the memorial site.<sup>149</sup>

Subsequent to the memorial's installation, it was learned that many of the deceased, anonymous babies had been the victims of organ and tissue retention autopsies. In a move to reduce public anger sparked by this knowledge - a hotline service was set up to deal with the huge public outcry to the unsanctioned invasive medical research - the Department of Health, in conjunction with the Adelaide Cemeteries Authority, 'upgraded' the memorial (2003) with the addition of a pergola with seating, and enhanced landscaping.

The art of Blyfield, Lorraine and Truman had been a catalyst for community interest, education and subsequent action.<sup>150</sup> Overwhelming positive community response to

<sup>147</sup> Layther, J., *West Terrace Cemetery Baby Memorial (Private) Project Brief*, Department for the Arts and Cultural Development, South Australia, 1996, p1.

<sup>148</sup> Phone conversation with artist Julie Blyfield, of Gray Street Workshop, Adelaide 5.06.07

<sup>149</sup> 05.06.07

<sup>150</sup> Upgraded Baby Memorial, Ministerial, 6.10.2003, <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/Default.aspx?tabID=53&mid=452&ctl=ViewDetails&ItemId=1034&PageIndex=0> 01.07.07

the baby memorial was publicised by Geraldine Doogue on ABC national radio.<sup>151</sup>



An international artist who represents, for me, a leading figure in public art is American-born Maya Lin (1959). Her work draws from her background within two disciplines: architecture and art. Her best-known piece is the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial in Washington DC, USA (1982). Lin won the commission for this memorial – funded by the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Fund Organisation – at the age of twenty-one and whilst still a student at Yale University.

The initial outpouring of opposition to Lin's design from a nation recovering from participation in a war that had become increasingly unpopular was immense. Catchphrases such as 'the black gash of shame' fuelled the critics' denunciation.<sup>152</sup> These objectors could not have envisaged the remarkable turnaround in acceptance of the memorial upon its completion.

The memorial receives approximately three million visitors each year. Made of cut granite, the memorial's extended in-ground 'wall' displays the names of all 58,175 US soldiers whose lives were lost in the Vietnam. The work makes a profound impact: its minimalist polished rock surface displaying the soldiers' names merge with the viewing public's own reflections, creating a sense of fusion between the living and the dead.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Geraldine Doogue, *Baby Cemetery*, ABC Radio National, Life Matters, 27.05.02  
<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/lm/stories/s563712.htm> 01.07.07

<sup>152</sup> Womens History – Biographies- Maya Lin. [www.gale.com/free\\_resources/whm/bio/lin\\_m.htm](http://www.gale.com/free_resources/whm/bio/lin_m.htm)  
19.05.07

<sup>153</sup> *Art in the Twenty-First Century*. A PBS documentary series about contemporary visual art in America and the artists who make it. [www.pbs.org/art21/artists/lin/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/lin/index.html) 19.05.07



So great has been the community's physical interaction with the memorial that in 1994 restoration work was required. Visitors constantly touching the wall and taking rubbings of names had eroded the surface.

Maya Lin conceives of the entity of 'earth' as the basis for her concept.<sup>154</sup> In addition, her careful consideration of the *given* space for a work is also apparent. The monument 'orchestrates' the visitor's approach by virtue of its visual linkages with the Washington and Lincoln Memorials respectively.

Maya Lin gives conscious consideration to community interaction with her works. Emphasising connection with the public, the artist notes, 'It's like a thread of life'. She also says of her work:

*The piece begins as something for me, but it ends only when a visitor has interacted with it. It is not finished as a finite object; it requires an act of participation.*<sup>155</sup>

I am also drawn to Lin's focus on the written word. The soldiers' names on the Vietnam memorial have been etched ragged right on each panel to resemble a book.<sup>156</sup> The Vietnam Veterans Memorial stirs the senses through sound, touch, and reflection, both literal and metaphorical.<sup>157</sup>



Anthony Gormley is another artist who believes in the importance of taking art to the community. Although his best-known work, *The Angel of the North* (Gateshead,

<sup>154</sup> [www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Vietnam\\_Veterans\\_Memorial.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/buildings/Vietnam_Veterans_Memorial.html) – 19.05.07

<sup>155</sup> Rabinowitz, C. S., 'Making Waves: Cay Sophie Rabinowitz Interviews Maya Lin', *Art papers*, March/April 2000, v.24, no.2, p.29. [prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/lin/](http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/lin/) - 14.05.07

<sup>156</sup> Maya L, quoted in the UC Berkeley Berkeleyan, March 15, 1995. [www.greatbuildings.com/architects/Maya\\_Lin.html](http://www.greatbuildings.com/architects/Maya_Lin.html) 14.05.07

<sup>157</sup> [www.answers.com/topic/maya-lin](http://www.answers.com/topic/maya-lin) - 76k - 14.05.07

1995/98), is a permanent fixture,<sup>158</sup> a number of his installations have literally travelled. These include *Another Place* (1997), at Crosby Beach, near Liverpool, England,<sup>159</sup> an installation comprising 100 figures in cast iron, and *Inside Australia*, an installation of steel alloy figurative sculptures, at Lake Ballard, Western Australia.<sup>160</sup> The nature of the locations selected by Gormley — often environmentally challenging — is of paramount importance in respect of optimising viewer engagement.<sup>161</sup> Some of his works have involved local communities in their actual making. His *Field* sculptures, for example, presented in a number of British localities, have utilised local communities in the making of the thousands of clay pieces required.<sup>162</sup>

Through *Another Place*, Gormley raises the issue of migration. The imposing collection of 100 life-sized cast iron figures, modelled from the artist's own body, are dotted along Crosby Beach, in Northern England. This installation, though not directly reflecting convict transportation, responds to universal sentiments associated with emigration.

Gormley's hope is that visitors to Crosby Beach will add a further dimension to *Another Place*. He feels that the work takes on a new life from all who associate with the figures. Again, although Gormley was not working specifically with the community to design *Another Place*, he believes that viewers play an important role in their bringing of memories and personal associations to his art. As such, the work

<sup>158</sup> Steel structure 22m x 54m x 2.20m.

<sup>159</sup> Cast iron figures 189cm x 53cm x 29 cm.

<sup>160</sup> Participant in Perth International Arts Festival, 2003. Clark, D., *Art Monthly*, Maddocks, H, 'Antony Gormley', *Art Monthly Aus Ltd.*, Canberra, May 2003, No 159, p3.

<sup>161</sup> *Another Place* has been viewed on Crosby Beach Liverpool as part of the 135 kilometre Mersey Waterfront from 17/6/2005 to 30/11/2006. Previously displayed in Cuxhaven, Germany (1997), Stavanger in Norway (1998) and De Panne in Belgium (2003), is expected to move to New York following its installation in South Sefton, ending in November 2006.  
<http://www.tate.org.uk/liverpool/exhibitions/gormley/> 17.05.07

<sup>162</sup> *Field*. In 1993, Tate Liverpool showed *Field for the British Isles* made with people in St Helens, Merseyside and Ibstock, a local brick making company.  
*Field*, American version, 1990. Clay figurines made by the Texca family of brick-makers in San Matias, Cholula, Mexico. Thirty-five thousand figures made by approximately sixty men, women and children aged from six to over sixty, mostly members of the extended family.  
*Asian Field* (2003) 120,000 hand sized figurines made by 300 people of all ages from the Hudau District in Guangzhou.  
*Field* complements *A Secret History of Clay: from Gauguin to Gormley*, Tate Liverpool, 28 May - 30 August, 2004  
<http://www.tate.org.uk/liverpool/exhibitions/gormley/> 17.05.07



takes on a virtual life of its own, encouraging contemplative responses in viewers that endure long after the work's departure from the site in which it had been physically experienced. In Gormley's words:

*Each person is making it again... for some it might be about human evolution, for others it will be about death and where we go, where our bodies finally belong, do they belong to the earth and the elements? And I think that's what's amazing about... the work of now — contemporary art, it's no longer representing the ideology of a dominant class it's actually an open space that people can make their own.*<sup>163</sup>

The 2006 Sydney Biennale included Gormley's *Asian Field*, an installation of 180,000 hand-sized sculptured clay figures crafted in five days by 350 Chinese villagers using 100 tons of red clay. Each figurine is small, but collectively, all 180,000 portray a veritable 'sea of humanity'. Gormley organised the villagers of Xiangshan, north-east of Guangzhou city, to model the figures.

With its formal structure composed of a large number of common elements organized into a coherent whole, Gormley's *Asian Fields* is, in principle, akin to my work of 900 cloth bonnets. There also exists a correlation between Gormley's piece and my own in that each has involved a community of non-art-specialists in the making of the work's basic components.



<sup>163</sup> [http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2005/07/05/art\\_antony\\_gormley\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2005/07/05/art_antony_gormley_feature.shtml)  
17.05.07

Another artist whose work I have examined is Danish-born Olafur Eliasson, whose approach is also based upon active participation of the audience. Now living in Berlin, he produces site-specific installations and large-scale 'immersive environments.'<sup>164</sup>

Eliasson's public art piece, *The cubic structural evolution project 2004*, presented at the National Gallery of Victoria (2 March- 13 May, 2007),<sup>165</sup> is another example of an artist involving the community in the making of his artworks. With this particular project, Eliasson captivates both adults and children. The work offers the audience a chance to design a 'cityscape' from over 400,000 white Lego pieces.<sup>166</sup> Eliasson embraces the degree of unpredictability with regard to the final 'product', stating, 'I see that the person, when engaging in a project of mine, influences the meanings generated.'<sup>167</sup>

Another example of an artist involving the general community in the actual forming of his/her artworks is New York-based artist Spencer Tunic. Tunic has recruited very large numbers of volunteers within a variety of locations around the world (including Melbourne) to appear naked in staged mass 'poses' which he then photographs. Recently (May 2007), 18,000 people posed for Tunic in Mexico city's Zocalo Square, the heart of the ancient Aztec empire.<sup>168</sup> Tunic states that terrorism, senseless crime and murder, fanatical societies and the vulnerability of the human form influence the direction of his work.<sup>169</sup> He creates virtual landscapes of the human form. All who volunteer receive a free, signed photograph of the event in which they have appeared.

Christian Boltanski is a multi-disciplinary artist who uses photography, sculpture, painting and installation. Through his art he focuses upon death, memory and loss, often upon the anonymous: those who have vanished from the historical record.

It was his realisation that very few photographs existed that connected him with his past that drew Boltanski to the extensive use of photography within his installations. His installations act as powerful spectacles. Boltanski reassembles the past by

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<sup>164</sup> [www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2003/11/12/batate12.xml](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2003/11/12/batate12.xml) 15.05.07

<sup>165</sup> On loan from the Queensland Art Gallery.

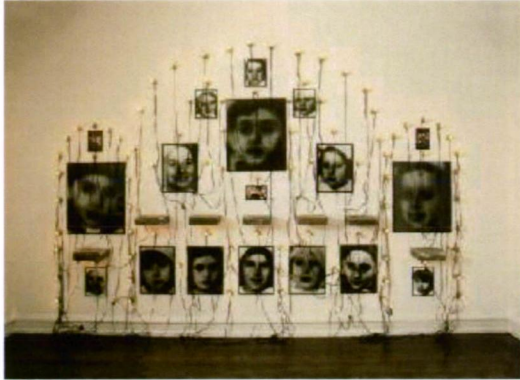
<sup>166</sup> [www.theartnewspaper.com/whatson/list.asp?fm\\_city=Melbourne](http://www.theartnewspaper.com/whatson/list.asp?fm_city=Melbourne) 15.05.07

<sup>167</sup> [www.ngv.vic.gov.au/ngvinternational/](http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/ngvinternational/) 15.05.07

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/18534065/> 16.05.07

<sup>169</sup> [http://au.geocities.com/masthead\\_2/issue2/tunick.html](http://au.geocities.com/masthead_2/issue2/tunick.html) 17.05.07

incorporating a variety of particular found objects: objects that, he perceives, embody profound latent significance. He awakens true-life events that retain a past and yet are only preserved in one's memory, regardless of whether he is referring to his own life or the lives of others.<sup>170</sup>



I admire Boltanski's use of the symbolic as a tool to explore the power of memory and the concept of identity. I draw on two of his installations for analysis as examples to which I particularly relate. These are *Canada* and the monumental *The children of Dijon*. Both works exemplify the artist's quest to address tragedies of the Second World War.<sup>171</sup> *Canada* (1988) is an installation of second-hand clothing, the only additional props being lights and the rails from which the clothes are hung. One could be forgiven for assuming that Boltanski's title refers solely to Canada, the country in which the work is exhibited (in the Ydessa Hendeles Foundation, Toronto). In fact, the title refers more to *Kanada*, a euphemism, contrived by the Nazis to negate the reality of their Jewish extermination program, for the depots within concentration camps where the personal belongings of incarcerated Jews — such items as clothes, shoes, spectacles and human hair — were accumulated and recycled. This installation recalls the grim memory of the camps, such as that in which Boltanski's own father — a Jew of Ukrainian heritage — perished.

Boltanski has utilised large quantities of clothing in other installations, such as *Lake of the Dead* (Institute of Contemporary Arts, Nagoya, 1990) and *Lost Workers: The Work People of Halifax 1877–1982*.<sup>172</sup> Boltanski's adaptation of 'flea-market' clothing, and in such immense quantities, is compelling. Though monetarily cheap, the items are yet symbolically rich. They bring to the surface memories of

<sup>170</sup> [www.mediamatic.net/article-5995-en.html](http://www.mediamatic.net/article-5995-en.html) 17.05.07

<sup>171</sup> [www.mfa.org/exhibitions/sub.asp?key=15&subkey=600](http://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/sub.asp?key=15&subkey=600) 17.05.07

<sup>172</sup> Installation of shredded clothes, Henry Moore Studio, Dean Clough, Halifax, 1994

experiences that may have been nullified because they are too confrontational, too painful. His work is simultaneously revealing yet disturbing; nevertheless, it is the subject matter that I find disquieting, not the presentation of the art.

As with the sight of those used clothes, worn and owned by an anonymous ‘someone’, and which Boltanski has chosen as a symbol for the Nazi-inflicted atrocities, so I have decided upon a single item of clothing — namely, a small pale bonnet — as a symbol for all the lost hopes and dreams of a maligned group of women within colonial society.

In speaking of his art, Boltanski reveals:

*Ideally I want to touch people, and I think that my art is for a large public — it's not to be viewed by some exclusive crowd. I try to make my art viewed as if it were life, so that people can speak about my art as if it were something that they know.*<sup>173</sup>

Boltanski forces the audience to look back, and reflect. His work does not rely on community assistance for its construction, though his installations are typically portable, theatrical-like visual performances offered to a multitude of people in different locations. Boltanski's art challenges, but it also gives the onlooker a visual story in the hope that by retaining stories there will be a continuance of cultural knowledge.<sup>174</sup>

Christian Boltanski and Anthony Gormley both participated in a ground-breaking site-specific public art event *Places with a Past*, hosted in 1991, by the Spoleto Festival, Charleston, USA. The event drew international artists and was curated by Mary Jane Jacobs, whose aim was to encourage the materialisation of the ‘ghosts of southern history’ through the eighteen contributions from twenty-three artists.<sup>175</sup>

Boltanski worked on two separate sites, resulting in *Shadows* and *Inventory of Objects belonging to a Young Woman of Charleston*. In *Shadows*, Boltanski made minimal

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<sup>173</sup> Semin, D., (1997), p30.

<sup>174</sup> Semin, D., (1997), p17.

<sup>175</sup> [indarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0268/is\\_4\\_38/ai\\_58499665](http://indarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_4_38/ai_58499665) 16.05.07

changes to a house located in the centre of Charleston's historic precinct to create a subtle look at life from within. In his second work he chose to arrange the belongings of an 'anonymous' (but fictional) college student, displaying her personal possessions in keeping with normal museum practice for the displaying of precious collections.

Anthony Gormley chose to display his sculptural work in the Old City Jail, a building of incarceration. This work was a catalyst for reflection on liberty in a city where racial inequality was legendary.<sup>176</sup> The first of Gormley's sculptural offerings was *Field*, an installation encountered on the second floor of the jail. This work, a precursor to *Asian Fields*, involved the artist collaborating with the Texca family of brick makers in Chohula, Mexico, an extended-kin company of 60 who made 20,000 figurines, of similar ilk to those crafted in China for Gormley in 2003. Trapped within the confines of their 'prison' within the exhibition site, the mouthless, speechless clay models represented the common people, servitude, and the labour of slaves.<sup>177</sup>

Ann Hamilton also participated in *Places with a Past*. A student of sculpture and textile design, Hamilton has utilised photographic work, videos, performance and found objects within her art. In 1999 she represented the United States at the Venice Biennale, where her art focused on topics relating to America's history of slavery and oppression. Her Venice installation consisted of walls embossed with Braille. This embossed surface became highlighted by the process of a striking red powder drifting down from above, which made the text unmistakably visible.<sup>178</sup> Many visitors were unable to resist the compelling desire to play with the powder and often wrote graffiti-type messages with it.<sup>179</sup>

Hamilton's work strikes a chord with me and I am conscious of the analogies between her art and use of enormous quantities of material, coupled with her labour-intensive approach, and the repetitive nature of my art. The public interface with Hamilton's

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<sup>176</sup> Neff, T., *Places with a Past: New Site-specific Art at Charleston's Spoleto Festival*, Rizzoli International Publications, Inc. New York, 1991, p120.

<sup>177</sup> Neff, T., (1991), pp 123–124.

<sup>178</sup> [www.pbs.org/art21/artists/hamilton/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/hamilton/index.html) 16.05.07

<sup>179</sup> [classes.design.ucla.edu/Winter04/256/projects/peter/report.html](http://classes.design.ucla.edu/Winter04/256/projects/peter/report.html) 17.05.07



work varies depending on the actual installation. In *Privation and Excesses* the public began to bring along their own pennies and add them to those on display.<sup>180</sup>



Hamilton's contribution to 'Places with a Past', *Indigo Blue*, was installed in a former garage repair shop, Mike's Garage, on Pinckney Street and entailed the arranging and folding of 48,000 blue pants and shirts. The clothing Hamilton used had once belonged to either individuals or companies whose livelihoods had come to an abrupt end through industry collapse. The owner's name, embroidered on each item of clothing, personalised the apparel. Hamilton's work acknowledged the labourer and specifically spoke of the indigo trade. This industry, introduced to Charleston's cultivators in 1744 by Eliza Lucas Pinckney, became well established and brought great prosperity to the local landowners<sup>181</sup> but then became eclipsed by the cotton industry. Visitors to *Indigo Blue* were presented with a visual reminder of loss, in this case brought to bear by industrial closure and consequent widespread dismissal of workers, through a connection with the clothes stacked in a manner simulating 48,000 flattened bodies and the adoption of repetitive performance by the single, lone figure working away close by, mimicking the erasure of history.

This monumental pile of clothing, meticulously folded, is raised off the floor by an elevated steel platform (17 x 24 feet) in the centre of the workshop. An air of quietness permeates the space, as if the work demands of the onlooker a reverential stillness. At the further end of this accumulation of clothing a wooden table is located at which a bowed figure sits noiselessly, facing away from the clothing, working at erasing names from indigo-coloured cloth-covered historical military manuals, line by line<sup>182</sup> — a repetitive task mirroring the interminable work to which those labourers,

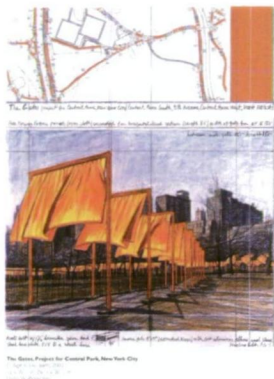
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<sup>180</sup> [classes.design.ucla.edu/Winter04/256/projects/peter/report.html](http://classes.design.ucla.edu/Winter04/256/projects/peter/report.html) 17.05.07

<sup>181</sup> Neff, T., (1991), p74.

<sup>182</sup> [classes.design.ucla.edu/Winter04/256/projects/peter/report.html](http://classes.design.ucla.edu/Winter04/256/projects/peter/report.html) 17.05.07

whose name-tagged clothing sits nearby, would have been subjected. In another room, above this workshop space, a number of sacks of soybeans, slowly sprouted, grew and subsequently rotted away, their presence a reminder of the harnessing of mother earth's resources and underscoring the notion of time.<sup>183</sup> Hamilton's art raises issues of social justice and, similar to my intent through *Departures and Arrivals*, the viewer is offered a space in which to reflect upon such issues.



Husband and wife artists Christo and Jeanne-Claude's<sup>184</sup> international projects are typically sustained by enthusiastic public participation. For their site-specific installation, *The Gates: Project for Central Park, New York City* (1979–2005), the pair focused their attention on the meandering 37 kilometres of the park's pathways. They erected 7,503 metal gates from which hung orange-coloured nylon fabric, raised seven feet above the ground's surface to form a 'guard of honour' along the park's walkways. Their twenty-six year collaboration was successfully completed and offered for public interaction from 12<sup>th</sup> — 27<sup>th</sup> February 2005. Viewed from above, the orange material snaked throughout the park, adding a vibrancy of colour to the blanched wintry vista. Christo and Jeanne-Claude had waited many years for permission to be granted for this spectacle to engulf New York's Central Park.<sup>185</sup>

Thousands of people worldwide were involved in the construction of the materials required for this project. Hundreds of people erected and dismantled the *Gates*. The community interaction was phenomenal. For two weeks the park was abuzz with

<sup>183</sup> Neff, T., (1991), p76.

<sup>184</sup> Christo: (b. 1935) American Bulgarian-born Christo Vladimirov Javacheff, June 13, Gabrovo, of a Bulgarian industrialist family.

Jeanne-Claude: (b 1935) American, French-born Jeanne-Claude Denat de Guillebon, June 13, 1935, Casablanca, of a French military family, educated in France and Switzerland.

[www.christojeanneclaude.net/](http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/) 18.05.07

<sup>185</sup> [www.nyc.gov/html/thegates/html/artists.html](http://www.nyc.gov/html/thegates/html/artists.html) 18.05.07

people interacting with the extraordinary splendour of the orange visual map, walking beneath the canopy of orange 'softness'.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude chose the title *Gates* with their immigration status in mind, having arrived in the United States from Hungary in 1964. Over many years the artists had developed a relationship with Central Park.<sup>186</sup> This emotional relationship with the area contributed to their decision to focus on that particular site for their project.

With the dismantling of the *Gates*, sixteen days after the work's installation, Central Park returned to normality, apart from recorded images, memorabilia and memories.<sup>187</sup> For Christo and Jeanne-Claude their wrapping amounts to:

*... an investiture, a rebirth, and an inauguration.  
More than an alteration it represents complete  
regeneration for a limited period of time. They  
see their art as raising the status of an object.*<sup>188</sup>

Without the assistance of thousands of workers, Christo and Jeanne-Claude's public art visions would never be realised. They discuss the idea that within their art they offer the public the opportunity to draw on that quality of love and tenderness that mankind has for things that are fleeting. In explaining their celebration of the transitory within their work the artists comment that:

*... we have love and tenderness for childhood because we know it will not last. We have love and tenderness for our own life because we know it will not last. That quality of love and tenderness, we wish to donate it, endow our work with it as an additional aesthetic quality. The fact that the work does not remain creates an urgency to see it.*<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> They retained pleasant memories of times spent with their young son strolling along the walkways.

<sup>187</sup> The aluminium was recycled into cans, the fabric was shredded and became incorporated into carpet padding.

[www.nytimes.com/ref/arts/design/GATES-REF.html](http://www.nytimes.com/ref/arts/design/GATES-REF.html) - 18.05.07

<sup>188</sup> Trust for Museum Exhibitions, The Wurth Museum Collection, *Christo and Jeanne-Claude International Projects*, Philip Wilson Publishers, London, UK, 2004, p 24.

<sup>189</sup> [www.christojeanneclaude.net/tg.html](http://www.christojeanneclaude.net/tg.html) 18.05.07



I particularly identify Kim Sooja's metaphoric use of cloth as suggestive of the human spirit. Historically, cloth appears to have predated almost everything conceived of, or fabricated by humans. It has sheltered and wrapped and protected mankind, and almost all the artists I have investigated during my research have incorporated cloth, using it to explore community dimensions of life within their respective art practices.

Kim Sooja was born in 1957 in South Korea, but like Christo and Jeanne-Claude, she now lives and works in New York. Sooja's approach centres upon the notion of sewing. Her assimilation of conventional cloth began after her art studies in Seoul, where she combined sewing with drawing and painting. Her ideas to incorporate traditional Korean fabrics and clothes within her art flowed from respect of traditional 'woman's work'. Her use of bedspreads and tablecloths within her art reflect the importance of these objects within her culture. Originally, Sooja chose to use personal items of value: her own bedspreads and clothes — articles sewn in partnership with her mother and grandmother — that represented her own family heritage.



I have high regard for Sooja's philosophical approach to the use of fabric within her art. She attributes great symbolic weight to cloth itself. In her own words she describes her culture's regard for the preciousness of cloth. We are wrapped up in cotton cloth at birth, we wear it until we die, and we are again wrapped in it for burial.<sup>190</sup> Public esteem bestowed upon cloth amid Korean society and the role within ceremonial occasions such as coming-of-age rituals, weddings, funerals and ancestral rites are acknowledged within Sooja's art. In identifying fabric with the body, considering the latter as analogous to a vessel that contains one's spirit, the qualities of cloth take on a far more enigmatic association. When a Korean dies, their family

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<sup>190</sup> [www.kimsooja.com/](http://www.kimsooja.com/) - 21.05.07

burns their clothes and bed linen, thus sending the departed one's spirit to the universe, free to enter the world beyond.

During the First Biennial in Kwangju (1995) Sooja presented an installation of 2.5 tonnes of recycled clothes in the form of scattered garments or bundles of clothes, traditionally known as *bottari*. Titled *Sewing into Walking*, the artist dedicated this artwork to the suppressed victims of a democratic protest in Kwangju in 1980. Sooja chose to work with materials loaded with inherent meaning, providing a potent reminder of the spiritual presence of the body.

In an interview with Olivia Sand, Sooja states her opinion of the artist's role:

*I do not see my role as to judge people, but rather as to raise awareness about certain topics. The response will be in the hands of each individual.*

In the same interview Sands questioned Sooja on her opinion of artists' ability to initiate events. Sooja's answer reflects my own views.

*Yes, artists could set things in motion, and can be very 'loud', but artists do not have enough power to persuade people to change the world. However, we are responsible for our own example and how we perform them. It is not necessary to make political statements, for example, but we can make a statement in a beautiful, peaceful, and spiritual way. In my opinion, artists can do something to resolve certain problems, but it is not easy, and it tends to remain a modest attempt of a very different scale than the head of a political section... As modest as our attempt may be, I think it is important to bring attention to the suffering and death caused by unconditional unfairness. We cannot just neglect that.<sup>191</sup>*

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<sup>191</sup> Olivia Sand's interview of Kim Sooja. [www.kimsooja.com](http://www.kimsooja.com) 21.05.07

## Exhibition Presentation

The thesis exhibition consists of a variety of elements.

1. 1143 names of babies, plus 357 spaces, inscribed on acetate sheet.  
(A book will be provided for the public in which to add names of any babies they feel should be included in addition to those listed on the display.)
2. A wall of baby bonnets — a representation of the 1143 documented babies with additional bonnets for the unrecorded babies.
3. A large photograph of children's reflections — taken in Yard One, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, 2007 — and accompanying soundtrack.  
(This refers to the on-going interest shown in *Departures and Arrivals* and subsequent community art projects that deal with the subject matter of convict women, and documents the involvement of school children in the project.)
4. Film projection. Documentation of the installation *in situ* in various locations and associated community engagement.
5. Material documentation of the art-process process.

The thesis exhibition brings together all that has eventuated from the community involvement with *Departures and Arrivals*. Although the format is different in presentation, the content represents the 'journey' of the installation and the involvement of all concerned since the project commenced in 2004.

Suspended acetate sheeting will hang in front of a white painted wall. Recorded on this clear surface are the names of the 1143 babies whose deaths have been officially documented. The remaining space — seemingly set aside for the notation of a further 357 names — remains, in fact, poignantly blank. These gaps are randomly spaced throughout the listed names. This refers to the many convict women's babies known to have died in the Cascades Female Factory (South Hobart), but whose deaths are unrecorded, their existence unacknowledged.

The South Hobart Primary School, situated in close proximity to the Female Factory, has been collaborating in my art projects for some time. The pupils' participation in making bonnets has been documented in a short film and participation in the *Blessing*

of the *Bonnets* ceremony has been filmed and photographed.<sup>192</sup> Often, the children have dressed in colonial costume to provide greater authenticity to the work that addresses nineteenth-century life.<sup>193</sup> In this instance, the children were photographed and audio-recorded running around in Yard One at the Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, re-enacting the lives of the children of the day in their colonial outfits. (Though for the 'real' convict-born, institutionalised children, there would have been little chance to run free in the confines of the Female Factory grounds). The photographs and sound levels have been manipulated. Perhaps the most evocative sounds result from the children's footsteps dashing across the wet cement slabs.

The exhibition will contain a large photographic image of children's reflections on the wet flagstones in Yard One. Reflections of the children were captured as they ran through soggy areas. I chose a photographic image of a child's reflection on the wet flagstones and developed it into a large print. It is intended to evoke an apparition of nineteenth-century children. This photograph, titled *Where have all the children gone?* will be exhibited at the end of a wide corridor. As the viewer walks towards the image an audio experience intermittently conveying voices of the schoolchildren recorded in Yard One will be offered.

A number of women have continued to make baby bonnets and I regularly receive packages containing these tributes. Interspersed with the new bonnets are the 900 cloth bonnets that were used in *Departures and Arrivals* at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum in Sydney in 2006. They bear evidence of the pigmented surface of the Barracks courtyard. Now they are weathered and have become crinkled in storage, some are even slightly mouldy. I have not interfered with the condition of the cloth,

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<sup>192</sup> Including the children walking in colonial costume down Macquarie Street from their school in South Hobart to St Davids Cathedral.

<sup>193</sup> Through involvement in my project the participating schoolchildren have developed an appreciation of the harsh reality and the struggle the convict women and their offspring endured. During the photographic and recording session in Yard One I was very impressed with the knowledge displayed by the children regarding the Female Factory's function and their understanding of the convict women and their children's detention. I overheard conversations between some of the students that conveyed quite a profound understanding of female convict history.

preferring to retain the sense of ‘memory’ that its new, though rustic, condition evokes.<sup>194</sup>

One bonnet sits alone on a white plinth. This bonnet was made by a wife for her husband’s ancestor’s baby. The convict women gave birth to her baby boy whilst incarcerated within the Ross Female Factory. Her convict record shows her master returned her to the female factory because of her insolent behaviour. Within a few months the baby boy was born. No trace has been found of his existence. The family presumes he died in the factory.

Damousi devotes an entire chapter to discussion of convict mothering in *Depraved and Disorderly*. She maintains that the separation of mother and child was an effective form of punishment, deliberately inflicted so as to cause emotional distress. It has thus seemed appropriate in the exhibition to commemorate the convict mother through the wall of mainly unnamed baby bonnets that signifies the duality of the mother’s grief. Her distress at society’s disregard of her worth and fundamental right to care for her own child and — in so many cases — heartbreak at her offspring’s early demise.

The final section in the exhibition will provide documentation of the ‘life’ of *Departures and Arrivals* itself. Images of the work as installed in numerous sites between 2004 and 2006 and subsequent events since held highlight community participation.

In an adjoining space, four wooden boxes of documentation that relate to the process of the project and the accompanying art are arranged on four individual tables allowing for personal engagement and reflection. The aged wooden boxes, too, are relics of a bygone era.

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<sup>194</sup> My original plan with *Departures and Arrivals* had been to leave the bonnets in Yard One and allow them slowly to erode, becoming victims to the ravages of the elements. This idea changed after watching the public’s connection with the art at the first installation of the bonnets. Bonnet makers were searching for their *own* bonnet and the whole community seemed, to some extent, to take ownership of this memorial

This documentation is considered as legitimate material for the exhibition itself and not simply as backup material unintended for public viewing. On each table there will be a book for comments.

## Conclusion

I have researched the issue of female convicts and have found significant knowledge-gaps in community awareness of the subject and indeed little community knowledge of the term, *female factory*. This is somewhat ironic, given the major role that female convict transportation has played in the establishment and development of Tasmanian culture and society, and the fact that many thousands of present-day Tasmanians are the descendants of convict women. My project has been concerned with contributing to the closing of this knowledge-gap.

With the awakening of women's interest and participation in a wide range of feminist issues, spurred on by the women's movement, a more balanced view of history has developed. This project has encouraged further consideration of the backgrounds, skills and circumstances of convict women, and has, it is hoped, served to correct their all-too-common misrepresentation.

At the same time as being contacted by sections of the community with little prior knowledge of convict women, however, I have also received an overwhelming response from actual descendants of convict women. It is as if these descendants have been poised, ready and waiting, to participate in a celebration of their female convict ancestors' lives.

I have investigated the potential of the artist's role as *animateur*: an instigator, facilitator and advocate in respect of community issues. I have witnessed members of the community becoming inspired to create bonnets and participate in the project in a number of additional ways, including attendance and hands-on involvement with associated events that I have organised. Components of my thesis exhibition provide documentation of such activities, and demonstrate the positive community spirit generated by *Departures and Arrivals*. The project has fulfilled its instrumental function of generating community involvement in an art-driven concept that possesses cultural relevance and meaning.

To be able to offer the community an avenue to commemorate an important section of our nation's history and to give descendants a chance to be part of a memorial to their *own* has been very important to my work.

A simple bonnet has symbolised the convict woman's sense of grief and loss at the death within the walls of the Cascades Female Factory of her infant child, incarcerated with her. There were in excess of 1500 such cases. It has been intended that the simple bonnet may serve as a memorial to those lost young lives.

Cotton fabric has been used for the bonnets in the installation because of cotton's cultural connection within certain societies in which homespun cotton signifies purity.<sup>195</sup> Through inviting the community to make bonnets for *Departures and Arrivals*, not only convict women themselves are being thus honoured, but also 'women's work' in general. The project pays tribute to the countless women who privately create works of art from cloth in order to clothe themselves and their families, grace their homes and nurture their souls.<sup>196</sup>

I have tested the proposition that, guided by a coherent artistic vision and through the agency of his/her art itself, a valid role for the artist in contemporary society is to function as a cultural *animateur*. The enthusiastic participation by sections of the community to make bonnets for *Departures and Arrivals* has indicated that there is indeed a place within society for the artist to *enable people to perceive, manipulate or otherwise grapple with reality*.<sup>197</sup>

For participants, the depth of emotion attached to the creation of the memorial is important — especially when honouring an ancestor. The act of reflection on the lives of the 25,000-plus women transported to the Australian colonies has been a widely-reported outcome on the part of community participants whilst sewing their respective bonnets.

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<sup>195</sup> In India unbleached, unsewn, homespun cotton *khadi* signals purity.

<sup>196</sup> Constantine, M., Reuter, L., *Whole Cloth*, The Monacelli Press, New York, USA, 1997, p41.

<sup>197</sup> p166.

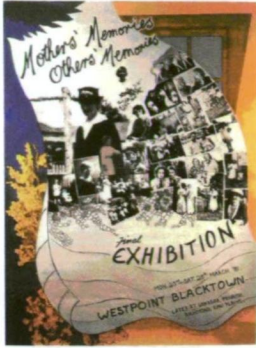


In setting out to involve approximately one thousand participants, it was necessary for the project to be widely disseminated. I have promoted the project through the media, including TV, radio, electronic media, newspapers and a variety of publications. *Departures and Arrivals* has become distilled to the essence of 'the bonnets' and I, unwittingly, to the 'bonnet artist' or 'bonnet woman'.

I have investigated artists whose work has clearly impacted on their audience and engaged the community, either within the making of their work or through community interaction with the artworks themselves. Artists such as Julie Gough, Ann Ferran, Christian Boltanski, Kim Sooja, Ann Hamilton and Christo and Jeanne-Claude have frequently employed cloth within their work, in order to evoke a sense of the past. Their works, though widely diverse in form oOne from the other, speak in common of erased histories, the forgotten and the transience of life. In addition to these artists, Anthony Gormley and Maya Lin have tapped residual memory within their work, realising objects that serve as monuments of remembrance. In Maya Lin's work these monuments take the form of more-or-less permanent public art, whilst Christo and Jeanne-Claude's transitory 'wrapping' artworks act as mnemonic triggers, their images living on in the viewer's mind.

The typical long-term lead-ups to Christo and Jeanne-Claude's installations, in themselves, invite public attention. The knowledge that their work remains on show for such a relatively short period compresses and seems to intensify the interest of the thousands of viewers who flock to connect with these spectacles.

Olafur Eliasson creates art that physically engages his audience, and in works such as *The cubic structural evolution project 2004* his invitation to the community to engage in the work attracts an enormous response. The perceived validity of this public art is sanctified by acquisition of the artist's work by major institutions such as the Queensland Art Gallery.



The art of Vivienne Binns has recently been documented in a major survey exhibition at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery (9 November 2006 — January 2007). Material promoting the exhibition acknowledged Binns as being at the centre of all major developments in Australian art and culture over the past 40 years — from ‘happenings’ to political activism.<sup>198</sup> I believe that Binns’ extensive community involvement during the 1970s has strongly influenced a greater acceptance within the art community of the lesser-valued crafts and of the principle of community participation in the art-making processes. Binns’ commitment to contemporary female artists’ work, and to conditions in the arts generally, has influenced change within the industry. I attribute her ground-breaking work within communities to have paved the way for installations such as *Departures and Arrivals* to be endorsed as relevant contemporary art. This installation, comprising 900 cloth-bonnets stitched by women within their homes, has received invitations to exhibit in major State art galleries both as an artwork in its own right as well as in conjunction with other artists.

Since 1997, Anne Ferran has investigated colonial history. Her photograms of the Rouse Hill House costume collection have allowed community access to material normally kept away from the public gaze. Ferran’s later work, in conjunction with Anne Brennan - *Secure the Shadow* - at the Hyde Park Barracks Museum in Sydney, examines the life of debilitated women. Subsequent work by Ferran has dealt with convict women through photographic interpretation at both the Cascades and Ross Female Factories in Tasmania. Her *In the ground, on the air* invited public participation in the speaking of the names of convict women’s babies who died at the Ross and Cascades (South Hobart) Female Factories. This added a significant dimension to the work, giving the viewer the opportunity for actual involvement.

<sup>198</sup> [http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/summerdiscoveries/summer\\_discoveries\\_2006-2007.pdf](http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/summerdiscoveries/summer_discoveries_2006-2007.pdf) 19.06.07

Ferran's work has covered women 'from the cradle to the grave' and from the lowest level of society to upper-class colonists. Her work also examines the treatment of institutionalised women, such as female patients in psychiatric wards. Ferran's photomedia work is a powerful means for her enquiry into, and communication of colonial and institutional life.

*Departures and Arrivals'* subject matter has drawn attention internationally. Women in New Zealand, whose ancestors chose to travel from Australia in order to leave the convict 'stain' behind and start life anew, have made bonnets. One of these women travelled to Hobart in order personally to deliver a box of baby bonnets to me. Another lady made a bonnet for the baby of her ancestor, who was transported on the *Rajah*. These women, along with hundreds of women in Australia, have made bonnets, sent memorabilia, shared stories and kept in touch. Articles published internationally have ignited interest even further afield. I recently received a baby bonnet made by a South African woman. Through the involvement and participation of others, *Departures and Arrivals* has reached a broad and diverse section of the community and created a collaborative association between artist and community. *Departures and Arrivals* has also inspired a number of ancillary artworks, including poems, music, literature and art, all of which acknowledge female convict history and help lift the veil of amnesia that has obscured the subject.



In the recent conservation management plan for the Cascades Female Factory in South Hobart, Lovell Chen Consultants, referred to my art as follows: *Artistic projects to interpret the site, for example the 'baby bonnets' project.*<sup>199</sup> This was the

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<sup>199</sup> Lovell Chen, *Cascades Female Factory* [South Hobart], *Conservation Management Plan*, p121.  
<http://www.dtae.tas.gov.au/femalefactory/docs/Draft%20Conservation%20Management%20Plan.pdf> 04.07.07



only example of an art project cited throughout the report. The Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage's Historic Heritage Assessment Section has approached me with the offer to promote *Departures and Arrivals*. They are especially interested in highlighting the community involvement component of the bonnet installation. Geoffrey Wood, Company Secretary to the Board of the Female Factory Historic Site Ltd, suggests that information and documentation on *Departures and Arrivals*, with its artistic interpretation of the convict women's story, will play a role in the recommendation for the proposed World Heritage nomination of the site, a proposal which will be considered by UNESCO in 2009.<sup>200</sup>

*Departures and Arrivals* has become a catalyst for extended community engagement. The interest sparked by the 900 cloth christening bonnets has generated engagement by local schools which are participating in on-going projects related to the female factory site at South Hobart. Documentation of the events in which students have been involved is an important component of the thesis exhibition.



With increasing awareness of, and growing interest in the global transportation of convict women and of migration in general, international interest appears to be growing in community-based art projects. I presently have over seven thousand 'colonial bonnets' which have been sent to me as components for my next project, namely, a 25,000-bonnet installation entitled *Roses from the Heart*, which will celebrate the lives of the 25,000-plus convict women transported to the Australian colonies. I am aware that thousands more are currently being sewn. The initial installation of *Roses from the Heart* will be held in Hobart in May 2008. Over the next three years this new work is to travel to a number of overseas countries, including Britain, Ireland, Canada, United States of America and New Zealand.

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<sup>200</sup> Wood, G., Letter of support, addressed to 'Whom it may concern', August 2007.

In the meantime, the life of *Departures and Arrivals* continues, with plans for installations in Canberra, ACT and NSW (at the Parramatta Female Factory site) in 2007 and 2008. Students in a number of schools in mainland states are also making bonnets, role-playing and writing on the subject of the lives (actual or imagined) of specific women and children for whom a student's particular bonnet would pay tribute. It is heartening to observe the enthusiastic on-going community involvement with this project.

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## Appendix 1: List of Illustrations

1. Page 17 *Locked in Time*, Matrons Cottage, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, 2003
2. Page 20 Initial stages of *900 Bonnets*, Tasmanian School of Art. Artist Christina Henri. 2003
3. Page 20 *900 Bonnets*, Tasmanian School of Art, Hunter Street. Honours examination, 2003
4. Page 23 *Departures and Arrivals*, (aerial view), Female Factory, South Hobart, March, 2004
5. Page 25 *Departures and Arrivals*, (aerial view) (b&w) Yard One, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, 2004
6. Page 29 Bonnet images on polystyrene balls and single bonnet material ready to be sewn, 2004
7. Page 33 *Departures & Arrivals*, Yard One, Female Factory, South Hobart. March 2004
8. Page 34 *Departures and Arrivals*, preparation, Yard One, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart. ABC Rewind producer, Justin Murphy and crew with Christina Henri, 2004
9. Page 35 Assembling *Departures and Arrivals*, Ross Female Factory Site, April, 2004.
10. Page 36 *Departures and Arrivals*, Ross Female Factory Site, April, 2004
11. Page 37 *Departures and Arrivals*, Ross Female Factory Site, April, 2004
12. Page 38 *Departures and Arrivals*, Ross Female Factory Site, April, 2004
13. Page 38 *Departures and Arrivals*, awaiting unloading, Highfield Historic Site, Stanley, 2004.
14. Page 40 *Departures & Arrivals*, George Town, (bonnet detail, Patrice Dancers) 2004. Photographer Mark Hobden
15. Page 41 *Departures and Arrivals* (bonnet detail) Crown Princess Mary's bridesmaid and flower girl gowns, gazing on. Bond Store, TMAG, 2004
16. Page 42 *Departures & Arrivals* (reflection) Design Centre of Tasmania, Launceston, 2005
17. Page 43 *Departures & Arrivals* (bonnet detail) Port Arthur Historic Site, December, 2005
18. Page 45 *Departures & Arrivals* (bonnet detail) Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, 2006
19. Page 46 *Departures & Arrivals*, (aerial view) Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, 2006
20. Page 46 *Departures and Arrivals*, preparation, Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney, 2006 (Christina Henri, John, Darcey, Catherine Pettman and John Menzies)
21. Page 47 *Departures and Arrivals*, Permanent Display, The Watch House, George Town, 2006
22. Page 53 *Past and Present*, Front cover, 'Soft Caps' (Anne Ferran)
23. Page 55 Julie Gough, *Home sweet Home*, courtesy [http://colonial.arts.utas.edu.au/old\\_caia\\_site/juliegough/index.html#homesweethome](http://colonial.arts.utas.edu.au/old_caia_site/juliegough/index.html#homesweethome)
24. Page 57 West Terrace Cemetery
25. Page 58 Maya Lin, courtesy <http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/lin/images/3>
26. Page 59 Anthony Gormley, *Another Place*, courtesy [http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2005/07/05/art\\_antony\\_gormley\\_feature.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2005/07/05/art_antony_gormley_feature.shtml)
27. Page 61 Olafur Eliasson, *The cubic structural evolution project*, 2004, courtesy NGQ
28. Page 61 Olafur Eliasson, *The cubic structural evolution project*, 2004, courtesy NGV
29. Page 63 Christian Boltanski, *The children of Dijon*.
30. Page 66 Ann Hamilton, *Indigo Blue*
31. Page 67 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, *The Gates, Project for Central Park, New York City* Photography of drawing, Wolfgang Voltz
32. Page 69 Kim Sooja, *Encounter — Sewing into Looking*, 1998, Collection of the artist
33. Page 78 Vivienne Binns, *Mothers' Memories, Others' Memories'*
34. Page 79 *Awash with Bonnets*, Yard One, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, March, 2000
35. Page 80 *Blessing of the Bonnets* ceremony, St David's Cathedral, March, 2007

## Appendix 2:

Table 1: Occupations of Female Convicts Prior to Transportation  
(Number)

	First Recorded occupation	Second Recorded occupation
General servant	444	20
Housemaid	389	20
Kitchenhand	317	3
Allworker	192	3
Nursemaid	189	14
Laundress	141	4
Dairyhand	127	6
Cook	87	15
Seamstress	63	11
Nurse	42	
Dressmaker	32	8
Milliner	18	2
Farm labourer	14	
Bootmaker	6	
Confectioner	6	
Housekeeper	6	4
Bar attendant	4	
Chambermaid	4	1
Governess	3	
Silk weaver	3	
Caneworker	2	
Cotton Spinner	2	
Dairy producer	2	
Factory labourer	2	
Hawker	2	
Baker	1	
Embroiderer	1	
Gipsy	1	
Jeweller	1	
Lace manufacturer	1	
Laundrymaid	1	24
Servant		2
Tape weaver	1	
Tobacco maker	1	
Upholsterer	1	
Wool spinner	1	
Unfit	1	
Number of cases	2108	137

Source: Convict Indents

Oxley, D., 'Female Convicts', in Nicholas, S., *Convict Workers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, New York, 1988, p92.

**Appendix 3.** To date *Departures and Arrivals* has been exhibited on nine separate occasions at the following venue

Yard One, Cascades Female Factory Historic Site,  
South Hobart, Tasmania.

Exhibited as part of the Tasmanian Bicentennial Program. 8 March – 1 April 2004

Included in Gyuto (Buddhist) Monks' appearance  
at the Female Factory Historic Site as part of  
Hobart's Mountain Festival. 20 March 2004

Ross Female Factory, Ross, Tasmania 3 April – 30 June 2004

Burnie Regional Art Gallery, Burnie, Tasmania\* 18 June – 18 July 2004

Escape, Tasmanian Wilderness Café Gallery,  
St. Marys, Tasmania\* 30 July – 16 August 2004

Highfield Historic Site, Stanley, Tasmania\* 29 August – 4 October 2004

Female Factory Site, George Town, Tasmania,  
privately owned land, permission granted by owners.  
Included in '*Back To George Town*' Tasmanian  
Bicentennial Program. 13 – 15 November 2004

Bond Store, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery,  
Hobart, Tasmania. Included in *Celebrate Your  
Story*, final Exhibition for the Tasmanian  
Bicentennial Program.\* 16 December – 16 January 2004

Design Centre of Tasmania, Launceston, Tasmania  
*Departures and Arrivals* shown jointly with Melbourne  
photographer Bronek Kozka's photographic exhibition  
*Auschwitz Revisited*\* 10 May – 26 June 2005

Port Arthur Historic Site, Port Arthur, Tasmania 13 November – January 2006

Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Historic Houses  
Trust, Sydney, New South Wales 17 February – 9 April 2006

\*Denotes where the installation was exhibited indoors.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Nine Hundred Bonnets**

**This set of lyrics has  
been removed for  
copyright or proprietary  
reasons.**

by Trica Lain Noakes

Music collected by Alexander Campbell "The Last Cradle Song" 1816

## Appendix 5

‘Van Diemen’s Land’

This poem has been  
removed for copyright or  
proprietary reasons.

‘Van Diemens Land’ a Haiku sequence  
by Sheila Windsor (UK) and Ron Moss (Tasmania)

*Yellow Moon*, Winter, 2004



## **Appendix 6**

Hustler, B., (Acting editor) Gazette of the Lancashire Family History and Heraldry Society (UK), Issue No 15, pp4-5, August 2004.

### **IN MEMORY of LITTLE ONES**

Submitted by Ralph Peacock.

This item is taken from the group forum of the British Quilt List (BQL) and was originally written by Helen from Hobart and dated March 2004.

**900 Calico Colonial Christening bonnets.**

**This extract has been  
removed for copyright  
or proprietary reasons.**

## Appendix 7

~Christina's Many Bonnets~

This item has been removed for copyright or proprietary reasons.

~Kim Peart~

**Appendix 8**

*900 Bonnets*

**This set of lyrics has  
been removed for  
copyright or proprietary  
reasons.**

*(CD:Between the Moon and the Sun)*  
Vince Brophy  
2004

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- 2002 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2001 Diploma of Art, Craft and Design, TAFE, Hobart, Tasmania

## Conference Papers/Presentations

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- 2004 Henri, C., 'Departures & Arrivals', *Herstory. Women's hidden history in Tasmania*, Women Tasmania, 26<sup>th</sup> May
- 2004 Henri, C., *900 Bonnets*, State Library of Tasmania, Launceston, Tasmania 5<sup>th</sup> April.

## Solo Exhibitions

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- 2003 *900 Bonnets*, installation, Matrons Cottage, Female Factory Site, South Hobart, Tasmania. December – on going.
- 2004 *Departures & Arrivals*, installation, Narryna Historic Site, Battery Point, Tasmania. May - On going.
- 2004 *Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, Yard One, Female Factory Site, South Hobart, Tasmania. 6<sup>th</sup> March – 29<sup>th</sup> March.
- 2004 *Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, Ross Female Factory Site, Ross, Tasmania. April 3<sup>rd</sup> - On going.
- 2004 *Departures & Arrivals 1*, display, State Library, Launceston, Tasmania. 5<sup>th</sup> April – 3<sup>rd</sup> May.
- 2004 *Departures & Arrivals*, Studio Theatre, University Complex, University of Tasmania, Hobart
  - *Colonialism & its Aftermath* Conference 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June
- 2004 *Departures & Arrivals 1*, display, Tasmanian Wool Centre, Ross, Tasmania. 5<sup>th</sup> April - On going.
  - Departures & Arrivals 1* display Tasmaniana Library, State Library, Hobart Tasmania 5<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> July.
  - Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, Burnie Regional Art Gallery, Burnie, Tasmania. 18<sup>th</sup> June – 18<sup>th</sup> July.
  - Departures & Arrivals*, installation, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania, *Colonialism and its aftermath* Conference, June 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>

- Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, eScApe Tasmanian Wilderness Café Gallery, St. Marys, Tasmania, 30 July – 16 August.
- Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, Highfield Historic House Stanley, Tasmania, 29<sup>th</sup> August – 4<sup>th</sup> October.
- Living Artist Week* participant 29<sup>th</sup> August.
- Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, Female Factory site, George Town. Included in 'Back To George Town' Bicentennial celebrations, 13-15<sup>th</sup> November.
- Departures & Arrivals 1*, installation, Bond Store, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery as Part of Bicentennial celebrations 1804-2004 *Celebrate Your Story*, 16<sup>th</sup> December – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2005.
- 2005 *Living Artist Week* participant,  
*900 bonnets*, installation, eScApe Tasmanian Wilderness Café Gallery, St. Mary's, Tasmania  
*Roses From the Heart*, Blessing of the Bonnets Ecumenical Service, St. James Church, Cygnet, 5 October.  
*Handmaid*, photogram, Hutchins Art Prize 2005, Salamanca Art Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania, June.  
*Handmaid*, Design for front cover of Invitation and front cover for Order of Service, Wesley Church, Hobart, celebrating convict made christening gown gifted to TMAG, to be housed in Matrons Cottage, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, Tasmania. 18th November  
*Departures & Arrivals*, installation, Port Arthur Historic Site, Tasmania, November – December.
- 2006 *Roses from the Heart*, Rose installation, Yard One Female Factory, South Hobart, 8<sup>th</sup> March.  
*Departures & Arrivals*, installation, Hyde Park Barracks Museum, Sydney 15<sup>th</sup> February – 15 April.  
*Lifting the Veil of Annesia*, St. Helens History Room, St. Helens. 21<sup>st</sup> April- 20<sup>th</sup> May
- 2007 'Blessing of the Bonnets' ceremony, St. David's Cathedral, Hobart. 8<sup>th</sup> March  
*Awash with Bonnets*, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart. 8<sup>th</sup> March  
 'Dancing to Life's Waltz', *Hutchins Art Prize*, 16-27th October.  
 'Blessing of the Bonnets' Ceremony, Highfields Pioneer Village, Toowoomba, 4<sup>th</sup> November

## Group Exhibitions

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- 2000 TAFE Statewide Exhibition, Long Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2000 *East Coast Reflections*, Annual Exhibition, St. Helens, Tasmania
- 2001 *New Books*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Printmakers, Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2002 *Fire and Water*, Christina Henri & Dianne Forster, printmaking, Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2002 *Postcard Exhibition*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Printmakers, Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2002 *East Coast Reflections*, Annual Exhibition, St. Helens, Tasmania



- 2002 *PrintMADE*, Printmaker's Society, Schoolhouse Gallery, Rosny, Tasmania
- 2003 *Living Artists Week*, printmaking, Muir Lower Deck, Hobart, Tasmania/Jackson & McCross, Battery Point, Tasmania/The Wilderness Society, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2003 *Here and There*, printmaking, Entrepot Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2003 *PostGrad Exhibition*, printmaking, Fine Arts Gallery, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2003 *Honours Exhibition*, Plimsoll Art Gallery, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania.
- 2004 *Women Tasmania, Material Girl Art Competition*, installation, Moonah Arts Centre, Moonah, Tasmania. 5<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> March
- 2005 *Departures & Arrivals/Auschwitz Revisited* Exhibition, with Bronek Kozka Design Centre of Tasmania, Launceston, Tasmania. May 10<sup>th</sup> - June 26<sup>th</sup>
- 2005 Hutchins art Prize
- 2007 Hutchins Art Prize

### **Curator/designer**

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- 2004 *The Rajah Quilt Exhibition*, Tasmanian Bicentennial Project, The Design Centre of Tasmania, Launceston, 22<sup>nd</sup> September – 8<sup>th</sup> November
- The Rajah Quilt Exhibition*, Tasmanian Bicentennial Project, The Bond Store, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 17<sup>th</sup> November – 28<sup>th</sup> November.

### **Citations/Reviews**

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- 2004 Mickelborough, L., *Female Factory*, *Tasmanian Ancestry*, Vol. 24, No. 1 - June p.49
- 2004 Rogers, L., *Hammersleys of Beaconfields: Discover Your Ancestors*, pps 22-23
- 2004 Maniero, D., *Imprint*, Autumn 2004, vol 39, no 1, p 21
- 2004 Palmer, T., March 7<sup>th</sup>, *The Sunday Tasmanian*, A voice for long-dead babies, p12
- 2004 Blewett, D., April 3<sup>rd</sup>, *The Examiner*, Convict babies recognised, p3
- 2004 Blewett, D., April 6<sup>th</sup>, *The Examiner*, Time to reflect on convict babies, p25
- 2004 Watson, J., April, *Country Courier*, Work of art recognises children of convict women, p1
- 2004 Pongrass, B., February, 4<sup>th</sup>, Taped interview aired on Tim Cox Morning Show, *ABC Radio*, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2004 Thompson, P., February, 5<sup>th</sup>, Live interview, *ABC Radio National*, Sydney, NSW, Australia
- 2004 Mahr, L., February, 11<sup>th</sup>, Live interview, *ABC Radio*, Canberra, ACT, Australia
- 2004 Saunders, L., March 4<sup>th</sup>, Taped interview, *ABC Radio*, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2004 Iliffe, D., April, 1<sup>st</sup> Live interview, *ABC Radio*, Launceston, Tasmania

- 2004 March 6<sup>th</sup>, Evening News Segment, *ABC TV*, '900 Bonnet Installation'.
- 2004 March 6<sup>th</sup>, Evening News Segment, *Southern Cross*, 'Departures & Arrivals'.
- 2004 April 5<sup>th</sup>, Evening News Segment, *Southern Cross*, 'Departures & Arrivals' Display
- 2004 Cox, T., July 29<sup>th</sup> Live interview *Departures & Arrivals*, Morning Show, ABC Radio, Hobart, Tasmania.
- Blitz, G., July 29<sup>th</sup> Taped interview *Departures & Arrivals* Break O Day FM Radio, St. Helens, Tasmania.
- 2004 Examiner News, September, 20<sup>th</sup> *The Examiner*, Skulduggery has its first birthday, p11.
- 2004 Blewell, D., September, 27<sup>th</sup>, *The Examiner*, Quilts recognise convicts' input.
- 2003 Fitzgerald, A., 12<sup>th</sup> November, Taped interview ABC Radio, Launceston, Tasmania
- 2004 <http://www.georgetown.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=209> Images of bonnet installation, *Departures and Arrivals*.
- 2004 <http://www.georgetown.tas.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=243> Information on *Departures and Arrivals* permanent installation and audio/visual display.
- 2004 Young, W., November, 14<sup>th</sup>, *The Sunday Examiner*, Tales told of town's early years.
- 2005 Stevenson, M., 28<sup>th</sup> May, *The Examiner*, Tells A Sad Story. P38
- 2006 Moody, H., July, *Inspirations*, No. 51, Inspiring Women, p9
- 2006 Tzotzagis, B., *Homespun*, Vol 7, No.10, Special Contents, Convictions of the Heart, p10.
- 2006 Bauer, M., Country Bumpkin website  
[http://www.countrybumpkin.com.au/article\\_info.php?articles\\_id=336](http://www.countrybumpkin.com.au/article_info.php?articles_id=336)  
'Staff at Country Bumpkin - supporting an inspirational cause'.
- 2007 Cook, Pauline, *Inspirations*, Vol 53, 'Convict Bonnets', p13.
- 2007 <http://www.stdavidscathedralhobart.org/> *Roses from the Heart*
- 2007 Woolley, C., 8<sup>th</sup> March, Interview, *Across Australia Radio Programme*.
- 2007 Moody, H., 'Stitches of affection, Roses from the Heart™', *Inspirations*, Issue 55, pp8-9.
- 2007 *Roses from the Heart™*, 'A challenge from Australia', *Embroidery Canada*, Spring Ed. Vol 34, No 3, pps 35-36
- 2007 Bingham, M., 28<sup>th</sup> July, 'Murmurs from dark past', Inside Stories, *The Mercury*, p5.
- 2007 Voss, F., 'Convict christening gown inspires gift', *The Sunday Examiner*, p26.
- 2007 Taylor, N., 'Hats off for my ancestors', *That's Life*. Issue 40, pps12-12.
- 2007 Lowe, M., 'Bonnets celebrate convict women', Spectrum Arts, *The Examiner*, 22 September, p45
- 2007 Carless, S., 'Convict bonnets to be blessed', *Milton Ulladulla Times*, 26 September, p15
- 2007 'Recognising our past in Textiles', *The Eastern Shore Sun*, September, p13
- 2007 Carless, M., 'What a Weekend', *Milton Ulladulla Times*, 3 October, p12
- 2007 News, 6.30 pm, *WIN TV*, Illawarra and South Coast, (NSW), 1<sup>st</sup> October
- 2007 Ashford, J., Highfields. 'A Blessing of the Bonnets ceremony', *The*

*Toowoomba Chronicle*, 23<sup>rd</sup> October, p11  
 2007 Marsh, J., 'Delving into past', *The Crier*, *The Toowoomba Chronicle*, 1<sup>st</sup> November, p27

## Grants, Scholarships, Awards

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- 2004 Winifred Daphne Booth Estate Bursary for Post Graduate Studies,
- 2004 Tasmanian Government Bicentennial Grant (October 2003 Round)  
 - *Departures & Arrivals 1*
- 2004 Tasmanian Government Bicentennial Grant (April 2004 Round) –  
*Departures & Arrivals 1*
- 2004 Department of Tourism, Parks, Heritage & the Arts, Parks & Wildlife Grant
- 2004 Tasmanian Regional Arts Quick Response Grant, *Departures & Arrivals*
  
- 2004 Northern Midlands Council Grant, *Departures & Arrivals*
- 2004 Hobart City Council Grant, *Departures & Arrivals*
- 2004 Mid Year Higher Research Degree University Scholarship, University of Tasmania  
 - 3 Year Scholarship
- 2005 *Roses from the Heart*, Successful applicant for grant Women Tasmania, advised  
 December, to be received March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2006.
- 2004 Nominated Tasmanian of the Year for *Departures & Arrivals* concept.
- 2005 *Roses from the Heart*, *Blessing of the Bonnet* ceremony, Cygnet, nominated event of the Year, Huon Valley Council.
- 2006 Nominated Tasmanian Honour Roll of Women
- 2007 “ “ “ “ “ “
- 2006/
- 2007 *Blessing of the Bonnets* Ceremony. Successful grant applicant, Women Tasmania

## Acquisitions/Collections

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- 2003 Henri, C., *Mathinna*, collograph, Riawana Aboriginal Education Unit, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania
- 2003 International Print Exchange, Miami & Louisiana Universities, United States of America
- 2004 Henri, C. *Mathinna*, collograph, donated by Riawana Aboriginal Education Unit to the University of Tasmania, installed in the Sir Stanley Burbury Foyer, Hobart campus.
- 2004 On-site installation board with photo-lith images of *Departures & Arrivals* donated by Parks & Wildlife Services to the Commandants Cottage, Ross Female Factory Site, Ross. September 19<sup>th</sup>.

- 2006 On-site installation board with photo-lith images of *Departures & Arrivals* donated by Watch House Committee, Watch House, George Town and George Town Council. January.
- 2007 *Handmaid*, black and white photogram, convict made christening gown, 1828, permanent exhibition, W.D.Booth Gallery, Matrons Cottage, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart.
- 2007 *Hopes and Dreams*, colour photogram, convict made christening gown, Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary, Denmark.
- 2007 *Hidden Treasures*, colour photogram (X2) historic family christening robes, His Excellency, the Honorable Mr William Cox, Governor of Tasmania private collection

## Citations & Reviews

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- 2004 'Rewind', Documenting 'Departures & Arrivals', ABC National TV, Sydney, NSW, Australia.
- 2004 Sanders, F., Documentary film, *Departures & Arrivals*, MN, USA.
- 2004 Swiss, D., Article and Book currently being written. *Departures & Arrivals*, MA, USA
- 2004 Noakes, T., Song *900 babies*, to be included in her CD of convict songs to be released 2004
- 2004 Brophy, V. Song *900 bonnets*, included in CD, released 2004
- 2004 Permanent on-site installation Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, December.

## Forthcoming Exhibitions

- The Continuing Journey – the Pupils*, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, 2008
- Reunited – A convict mothers story* – New media performance in collaboration with contemporary composer, Constantine Koukias, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, 2008
- On-site permanent installation proposal at the Matrons Cottage grounds, Female Factory Historic Site, South Hobart, 2007/2008
- Roses from the Heart* Events:  
Geelong, Victoria  
Adelaide, South Australia  
Parramatta, New South Wales  
Perth, Western Australia

## Work in Progress in Publication/Submitted

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- 2004-2007 MFA, Post Graduate Student Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania. Submitted August.
- Somercotes, Ross Project in conjunction with Gerrard Dixon, 2005-*Departures & Arrivals*, installation Canberra; venue to be confirmed.
- Wall of Names*, permanent installation, 2009
- Garden of Remembrance, permanent rose installation, Highfield Historic Site, Stanley. 2008

Roses from the Heart™ international event, on-going  
Parramatta Stories/artist residency NSW August/September 2008  
*Zoot Film Tasmania*, documentary film of Christina Henri's art journey  
highlighting convict women lives, 'Voices in the Dark', 2006 -